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THE CHALLENGE OF CHRIST

J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN, M.A.

"PREACHERS OF TO-DAY"

EDITED BY

REV. J. STUART HOLDEN, M.A.,

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THE CHALLENGE OF CHRIST

BY THE REV.

J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN, M.A.

RECTOR OF ST. MARY-LE-BOW, CHEAPSIDE;
CANON OF COVENTRY;
AUTHOR OF
"WAS JESUS CHRIST DIVINE?" "THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,"
"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST," ETC

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PREFACE

IN giving a title to the sermons here gathered together I have tried to indicate the special thought that I hope may be felt to underlie all that I have said—the thought that our own age is called to face the question, what is the nature and ground of the demand that Jesus Christ makes on human lives. It is this challenge of Christ that is working as a revolutionary force in modern life. To interpret this challenge in the light of modern conditions and needs is the supreme task of all who are called to be preachers of the gospel.

J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN

ST. MARY-LE-BOW CHURCH,
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THE CHALLENGE OF CHRIST

I

THE MORAL APPEAL OF CHRISTIANITY[1]

"Who do men say that I the Son of man am?"—MATT. xvi. 13.

ONE of our greatest needs in modern religious life is a clear issue that shall be at once a test and a challenge. For we all feel sometimes that we are entangled in that last battle in the mist "where friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew." But the issue must be moral, not intellectual. For it is to the moral power of religion that the conditions of modern life are making their appeal. And the gravest fact about our own age is the doubt, only deeper because it is often inarticulate, as to whether the moral power of Christianity has become exhausted. Open hostility is often good to meet; when the swords are out we know our strength. But it is not open hostility that we have most to fear;

[1] Preached before the University of Cambridge.

it is the pathetic feeling that the moral influence of Christianity has failed. Men are asking the old question, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" but not in the old spirit or with the old confidence.

And yet no one who knows anything of the life of the people will deny that the consciences of men are as responsive as they ever were to the challenge of great moral issues. Below the surface of contemporary life there is no indifference about ethical questions. Go where you will in England to-day, you will find the workers studying economics in order to reach conclusions that are fundamentally ethical. Never was there an age that asked more earnestly that we Christian men should produce our gospel or confess that we have no gospel to produce.

"Who do men say that the Son of man is?" Here is a clear moral challenge. And it is a challenge that cannot be evaded. For it is a challenge that comes to us from the facts of history. Right across the main track of human history stands the figure of Jesus Christ. No interpretation of the meaning of the world is possible till we have met the challenge of His question.

It is a moral challenge, for the appeal of Jesus Christ is to the moral instinct of humanity. And it is not by any process of thought, but by a

direct moral intuition, that we realize the significance of the appeal. I do not mean that intellect plays no part in our religious life. Thinkers like Browning and Bergson, who have practically denied to our intellectual faculties any power of apprehending spiritual reality, have been compelled to isolate the religious consciousness of the individual, and disintegrate the spiritual life of humanity. As a social faculty of our nature, intellect makes the gain of each life available for the needs of all the rest. If intuition is the inward and spiritual grace of the religious life, intellect is the outward and visible sign that makes that life sacramental—that is, available for human need.

But the point I want specially to emphasize is that the primary appeal of Christianity is to the moral intuition that lies deep in our nature—not easily roused into activity, but supreme in its mastery of our whole being when awakened into exercise.

I suppose it would be true to say that very few men reason their way to Christian faith. We claim the support of reason for conclusions reached by a different process. Like the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, we see a figure familiar to us suddenly become transformed. A fisherman's boat heaped with unexpected

harvest, a white road near Damascus under the glare of noonday, a lecture-room thronged with fellow-students, a quiet place among the fields—suddenly through the familiar things breaks the new revelation. We are like men attracted by the beauty of some picture, and then suddenly, as they gaze, the picture becomes alive. It is because the Christ of the gospels appeals thus to our moral intuition that He is the judge before whom human character is being judged every day. For every day a man must decide whether to trust fearlessly the moral instinct that tells him that this man is the true master of his life, or find reasons for evading the issue. By a man's attitude towards Jesus Christ, his own moral character stands revealed. To one man He will seem an inexplicable figure—a John the Baptist risen from the dead; to another He will seem a great teacher—one of the prophets; to another He will seem the consummation of the world's hope, the fulfilment of the great process of Divine revelation—the Christ. He will be to every man as much as every man's moral instinct will allow Him to be, and so it is still true that the pure in heart shall see God.

And the challenge remains. The question is renewed, lest our moral intuition become blunted. Passing from an academic atmosphere five years

ago into the strenuous activities of a parochial cure in a large industrial community, I think I have learnt to realize more than I did before the immense significance of Holy Communion as a constant renewal of the moral challenge of Christ. "Who say ye that I am?" The broken bread, the out-poured wine, are at once the question and the answer. And the answer is given not in terms of intellectual assent, but in terms of spiritual activity. It is not in thinking, but in living that we know ourselves as one with the spiritual reality of which Jesus Christ is, for us, the one adequate and complete expression.

And if the acknowledgment of God in Christ does not solve for us, "all questions in the earth and out of it," it does give us a standpoint from which to look out on the enigmas of the world. Doubts innumerable assail us on the right hand and on the left, we seem often to be standing in a little circle of light hemmed in by thick darkness —yet our moral instinct clings to Christ as the one sure fact. Take from us this assurance, and we are like sailors tossed on a strange sea when the lighthouse lamp has gone out.

There are two special directions in which the realization that it is by moral intuition that we respond to the challenge of Christ meets the need of modern thought.

The first is in regard to the Being of God. The weakness of much of modern Philosophy has been that it has tried to reach a conception of God by the way of intellectual effort, and has attained only to the non-moral idea of an eternal Substance or impersonal Absolute, leaving all the moral instincts of our nature unsatisfied. Along this line of advance an impassable barrier seems to stand between us and any real knowledge of the Divine.

> "Each faculty tasked
> To perceive Him, has gained an abyss where a dewdrop was asked."

But the moral intuition that answers the challenge of Christ leads directly into the heart of the Divine. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." But what has he seen? He has seen the moral ideal incarnate in a living personality. He has seen that the true nature of God is wholly ethical.

This is the supreme revelation of Christianity—

> "Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of Mine;
> But love I gave Thee, with Myself to love,
> And thou must love Me who have died for thee."

How much of the confusion of modern thought might be avoided if we could only make clear to men that this is the Christian truth about God. Our demand for a Personal God is after all only

a demand for a God to whom ethical life is possible —a demand to be set free from the cheerless moral confusions of Pantheism.

Take, for example, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. As a metaphysical truth how academic and out of relation to life's real needs it seems, and how ineffective are our efforts to give it the significance that we feel it ought to have. But restate it as an ethical truth ; and all is changed. Think of it as it comes in the familiar Christian formula : " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

" The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, the love that comes—that is for ever coming out of the heart of the Divine to give itself in sacrifice. " The love of God," that is, the love that is—that remains as an inexhaustible ocean of ethical life ; " the fellowship of the Holy Ghost," that is, the love that abides, that flows down all the avenues of life, that lifts into moral aspiration the common life of men, and becomes at last the love that returns to the heart of God in human service and praise.

And as the fellowship is the outcome of the grace, so the grace is the outcome of the love. And thus the Godhead is ethically complete.

Any metaphysical definition of God must almost of necessity proceed by the way of negation.

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Of all the names that we give to the Divine, perhaps that of "the Infinite" best indicates the gulf that separates the metaphysical from the moral idea of God. "Who say ye that I am?" The revelation of the Infinite? No, for the God revealed in Christ is no being without qualities, like the Brahma of Hindu Philosophy. He is fulness of life, fulness of love. The whole universe throbs with His life, and glows with His love. For there is no life but love, and all that is not love is death.

It is by no process of reason that we see thus into the life of things. It is by the instinctive moral response to the claim of Christ. Reason may lead us to the Infinite; it is Jesus Christ alone who brings us into the Father. If the intellectual faculty of our nature goes out to explore the way by which we have come, it explores it not from below, but from above, not from the standpoint of the far country, but from the standpoint of the Father's house.

And as the acknowledgment of God in Christ is the one avenue of insight into all that we are capable as yet of learning about the Being of God, so it is the one adequate inspiration of moral effort. If a vague Pantheism, unsatisfying to our moral nature, is the special danger that menaces modern thought, a kind of moral inertia

is the special danger of modern practical life. "I have not made the world, and He who has made it will guide." In one man it takes the form of demand for an infallible Church that shall take the task of moral responsibility out of his hands; in another it becomes an indolent acceptance of the ethical conventions of his own class; in another it shows itself in a fatalism that has deteriorated into mere superstition. But in all it means impaired spiritual vitality.

In the midst of this moral impotence stands the questioner with his question, "Who say ye that I am?" Master, we do not know. No, for you have not summoned your moral faculty into exercise, you have not called out the reserve, superconscious, powers of your nature. Go and face some great moral issue, go and do—then you will know. It is not in thinking, but in doing that we catch the deep pulsations of the world—it is he who willeth to do that shall know.

You will recognize that I do not ask you to accept Bergson's idea of the intuition of spiritual things as called into exercise by deliberate passivity. Perhaps Eucken is nearer the Christian standpoint when he speaks of the Independent Spiritual Life as appropriated by each individual in his striving for a comprehensive and harmonious personality.

For moral impulse is simply the desire to realize the fulness of our personal identity through the harmonious co-ordination of all our faculties. It is simply the transfer to our inner self of the old question of Jesus, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man whose being is not at unity with itself is only half alive. For integration is the special outcome of life, as disintegration is of death.

> "'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
> O life, not death, for which we pant,
> More life and fuller that we want."

But it is the paradox of Christianity that life grows as it gives, that self-realization is reached only by the way of self-sacrifice, which is the way of moral effort. Spiritual realization is not a higher form of aesthetic indulgence, to be achieved by the isolation of oneself; it is like the pillar of fire that a man must follow across the desert if he would keep it in sight. All this any man may test for himself. Let him remember when the light failed and the vision grew dim—let him remember the days when he would have found it hardest to answer with confidence the question of Christ—he will find that they were just the days on which he had allowed his moral effort to flag—the days on which he has reasoned himself into

distrust of his own intuitions. Or let him remember the days when his whole being rang true in response to the challenge, when Jesus Christ became the moral ideal in which his whole self was satisfied—he will find that they were the days when he had yielded unquestioningly to the moral impulse of his nature and had done right regardless of consequences. It is in the easy days that we lose the vision and grow unresponsive to the challenge. It is when the world smiles on us that we lose sight of Christ.

So the reward of moral effort is not always—perhaps not often—success, but the growing sense of fellowship with Christ. For identity of purpose brings identity of character. In supreme moments of moral effort I know myself as one with the incarnate moral ideal.

You know the old Eastern parable that tells how one came and knocked at the door, and he within asked "Who knocks?" "It is I," said the man outside, and the door remained shut. Then he knocked again, and when he from within asked "Who knocks?" he answered "It is Thou"—and the door was opened.

So it is with us. It is Thou who hast gone out in me into the agelong contest and hast come back weary, with feet bruised with the stones and forehead crowned with the thorns—and then the

door is opened and we know who stands within to welcome.

Lastly, notice how the fact that Christianity appeals to the moral instinct of our nature, lifts it above the danger of being displaced by the changes of human thought. "Who do men say that I am?" The answer of the philosopher and the theologian will vary from age to age, but the answer of the Christian man is always the same: "The moral ideal of humanity; the ethical revelation of God." Only one thing could ever supersede Christianity—the rise of a religion based on the incarnate revelation of a higher moral ideal. And can there be any higher moral ideal than the ideal of a love that gives itself without reserve for those who least deserve the gift?

They tell us that all this is a myth. Well, if so there has been no other myth like it in the world's history. You take it to the despondent and the degraded, and from the abysmal depths of human personality a moral impulse leaps to respond. You carry it to men of ancient civilization, or uncouth peoples just emerging from barbarism, and where reason hesitates moral intuition recognizes and rejoices. And then we bring it back to ourselves again, and in the presence of the broken bread and the poured-out wine we

meet the agelong challenge, "Who say ye that I am?" And while reason stands baffled before truths too great to understand, every moral instinct of our nature awakes to respond, "Thou art the Christ of God; Thou art the Saviour of the world."

For, after all, the supreme question is not, how fully do you understand, but how much do you care?

"What think ye of Christ, friend? When all's done and said,
Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

What is religion? Is it not just the giving of the best that we have to the highest that we know? The best that we have is ourselves, the highest that we know is Christ.

II

LOYALTY[1]

I. Loyalty as the Foundation of Religion

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?"—John xxi. 15.

DURING the next few weeks we shall all be thinking about loyalty, and about what it means and what it does. And therefore I want to try to show you that loyalty really goes deeper into life than we imagine, that it is, in truth, the very foundation of the Christian religion, that the ultimate test of every man's life is this: Was he loyal to the best that he knew? which means, for us who call ourselves Christians, was he loyal to Jesus Christ? The religions of the world fall into two classes. There are the religions that have, so to speak, grown naturally. They are generally tribal religions, and often not, properly speaking, moral at all. On the other side

[1] This course was preached in the year of the Coronation.

there are the three great religions that claim to be founded on a revelation—the religions of Buddha, Mohammed, and Jesus Christ. And no one doubts that it is these three religions to which the future belongs. Now when you look at these three religions you see that though all three are called after the name of their founder, there is a great difference between them. And the difference lies just in this, that while the Mohammedan does not worship Mohammed, nor the Buddhist Gautama, the Christian does habitually worship Jesus Christ. The very earliest account that we have of Christianity from a non-Christian source, the report of Pliny to the Emperor, tells us that the Christians were wont to meet before daybreak to sing hymns to Christ as a God. And so it has been ever since. Why is this? Surely the answer is that while the Buddhist believes Gautama to have passed into the bliss of Nirvana—practical non-existence; and the Mohammedan believes his leader to have long since ceased to have any kind of connexion with the world in which he once lived; we Christians believe that our Leader is still with us, still in real contact with the world that He came to save. That is the distinctive characteristic of Christianity among the great religions of the world. Other religions have had noble ethical ideas,

splendid ritual systems, but no other religion has claimed for its founder that he was still actually and literally in touch with his followers in every age and in every place. It follows that the position of Jesus Christ in the Christian religion is unique.

No other religion meets men with the same challenge of personal loyalty. But now, what is loyalty? I should define it as the recognition of something larger and more permanent than myself to which I owe devotion and service. It is an instinct of our nature, perhaps the highest instinct of our nature. And just because it is the highest instinct of our nature, it is easily destroyed or degraded. The coarse-minded man will be sure to sneer at it; the conceited man will despise it; the selfish man will resent its claim. So it becomes an almost infallible test of a man's character whether he is capable of loyalty or not.

There are three possible foundations on which religion may be built.

There is first the foundation of fear. And in the case of some men religion must, I believe, begin with fear, for nothing else will touch them. I do not want to see the old doctrine of hell preached in the crude way in which it was once preached, but I am sure that we have got to make men feel that they cannot play the fool with

life and its moral responsibilities and then imagine that in the end God will be too easy-going to trouble about enforcing the law that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Yet it remains true that the foundation of the Christian religion is not fear.

Again, religion may be founded on self-interest. You may say that honesty is the best policy; that it pays best to be religious. And I do not say that there is not a real truth in all this. Jesus Christ did claim to teach men how to make the best of their lives. But we all know that a religion founded on calculated self-interest must always remain an ignoble religion—that the man who is good only because he thinks it will pay best is not really good at all. What remains then as a possible foundation for religion? The instinct of loyalty. And it was to this instinct that Jesus Christ appealed. He said to men, "Come to Me, Follow Me." If He told them of rest and service and authority that would follow, He told them just as plainly of suffering and effort and self-denial. If a man began to make terms, to lay down conditions of discipleship, He would have none of it. It must be an unconditional surrender. "Lord, I will follow Thee, but my religion must not interfere with my business." "Lord, I will follow Thee, but I can-

not be different in my habits to the men with whom I associate." Then you cannot follow at all. For Christ's appeal is for loyalty, and it is of the essence of loyalty that it makes no conditions. A man may withdraw his loyalty from a king if the king has withdrawn his own loyalty from the ideal of kingship. For there are times when a man must honour the king by sacrificing the individual to preserve the ideal. But a man cannot give loyalty on any other condition than this—that the king shall be true to himself. And the King we worship is always true to Himself. So the Christian man is the man in whom loyalty to Jesus Christ is the master-passion of his life. Study the life of St. Paul if you want to know what that means. It was not the beauty of its ethical system, or the comfort of its promises, that drew St. Paul to Christianity. There flamed up in him this great passion of loyalty to Christ. "I want to live for this Man; to dare and suffer and work for Him. I want to feel every day that He approves my life; I want to stand at last before His judgment bar as a man who has done much because he loved much." It was not the faith of the disciples that stood the test of the death of Christ. Their faith collapsed at once. But their loyalty remained. Their King was dead, but they would never bow to any other king.

So to them came the assurance that their King was not dead. They were not loyal because they believed in the Resurrection; they were loyal before they knew that there had been any resurrection at all. It is not hard to be loyal to a king enthroned in splendour; but to be loyal to a king in exile, to a king who has failed—is not that hard? It was the splendid loyalty of the disciples that was the rock on which Jesus Christ built his Church.

Loyalty to Christ—what does it mean? That is the question that I want to try to answer on the next three sermons. But now I want to get you to agree that loyalty is the essence of Christianity. But loyalty needs two things. It needs opportunities for knowledge and for service. It needs to *know*. How much our loyalty depends on the almost personal relations that subsist in this country between the king and his subjects. It is one of the arguments for a monarchical system of government that it concentrates attention on one individual whose manner of life and appearance and ideas we know. Authority expresses itself in a personal form, not as a mere abstraction. Is not this exactly what the Incarnation means? Truth and love are transformed from mere abstract qualities when we see them in Jesus Christ. You profess to admire holiness; here

is One who is holy. You profess to desire justice; here is One who is just. I am sure that one reason why men are not stirred by a great passion of loyalty to Him is that they do not know Him. Suppose that we each resolved to read through one gospel a week for the next month. It takes a very short time to read one of the gospels. Do you not think that at the end of the month we should find our loyalty to Christ awakened? Would not the old appeal, "He loved me and gave Himself for me" speak to us with new meaning? It is not too much to say that a large number of really religious people have never formed any conception of Jesus Christ as a real person. Yet it is exactly this that is the secret of our religion. It is told of a celebrated preacher who was accustomed to attract large congregations by eloquent sermons that one day he found pinned on the desk of his pulpit a paper, on which was written, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Is that what you want—you who come here Sunday after Sunday? Oh, if only once we could all forget the preacher and the choir and the organist, and go home rather quietly at the end of the service because we had seen Jesus! You must see Him if you are to live the Christian life. For we cannot be loyal to what is unreal, and to be disloyal to Jesus Christ means to turn from God's

last and greatest revelation of Himself and go out into an eternity of darkness.

Then again loyalty grows by *exercise*. Why do we feel a special feeling of loyalty just now? Because we are approaching a time when we shall have a special opportunity for showing our loyalty. You cannot suppress all outward manifestations of loyalty without weakening the feeling of loyalty. "I want to sing 'God save the King': I want to cheer with the crowd; I want to wave flags and demonstrate." Do you say that all this is foolishness? Then you do not understand human nature. For God has made us so. Do you remember how Jesus Christ refused to rebuke His disciples for their enthusiasm and the palm branches strewed in the way. He told the Pharisees that the very stones would protest against the suppression of the instinctive desire of loyalty to express itself. Well, what, after all, is the meaning of a great service like this? Is it not a demonstration of loyalty to Jesus Christ? Perhaps we Christians are too much inclined to suppress all outward manifestations of loyalty. It was a splendid idea of the Bishop of London last Good Friday to organize that great procession through the streets of London as a demonstration of loyalty to Jesus Christ. Nothing is more odious than ostentation

in religion, but nothing is more inspiring than some great act that men do together as the expression of their loyalty to Christ. But it is not only in great demonstrations that we can express our loyalty. Jesus Christ has been crowned by His Father as King for ever; and no power in earth or hell can lift that crown from His head. But every man must crown Him King in the secret temple of his own personal life. Have you ever done that? If not, will you do it to-day, and go home and write in the fly leaf of your Bible, "To-day I crowned Jesus Christ as my King"?

"True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
King of our lives, by Thy grace we would be;
Under Thy sceptre, exalted and royal,
Strong in Thy strength, we will battle for Thee."

Christianity is a universal religion because it is founded on a universal instinct. It does not ask that men should bring strength or goodness or riches; it only asks that they shall bring loyal hearts, ready to love and labour in the service of their King.

II. Loyalty as the Motive for Obedience

"Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"—Luke vi. 46.

The three permanent enemies of all true progress are self-will, greed and isolation. For the

spirit of self-will is the spirit that desires to stand outside the Divine Law of obedience; the spirit of greed is the spirit that desires to stand outside the Divine Law of sacrifice; and the spirit of isolation is the spirit that desires to stand outside the Divine Law of fellowship. Any religion that claims to meet the real needs of human life must teach men how to conquer these three evil things—how to live the true life, which is the life of obedience, sacrifice and fellowship.

To-day I want to speak of obedience. The earliest lesson that we try to teach our children is the lesson of obedience. We know that if they are not taught to obey they will be a nuisance to themselves and to everybody else. It is not merely that we want them to do certain things; it is even more than we want them to learn the habit of obedience. For there are laws that regulate human life, laws that we did not make, and cannot change, and the man who sets himself against them will be broken in the contest. We express this thought by saying that every man must do his duty. I am afraid duty is a somewhat unfashionable word in modern life. Yet we know that the noblest lives are not the lives that do as they like, but the lives that are consciously living in obedience to a moral law that is higher than themselves.

But there are two difficulties about this call of duty. The first is that, as an ideal of life, it is cold and unattractive. The man who makes Duty his God is a man we are more inclined to admire than to imitate. We are tempted to make our own the words of Wordsworth's Ode :

> " Serene will be our days and bright,
> And happy will our nature be,
> When love is an unerring light
> And joy its own security."

Surely, we say, God has not planted His world with flowers only that we may prefer the grey granite of the mountains. Surely He has not given us all the generous impulses of our nature only that we may wrap ourselves up in the stoic creed of self-repression. The poet may sing—

> " thou dost wear
> The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
> Nor know we anything so fair
> As is the smile upon thy face."

But to us the smile seems cold and hard. That is one difficulty, and the other is the absence of any adequate motive for self-dedication to duty. I am told that I must do my duty, and the obvious reply is, why ? You say, because the voice of conscience tells you so. But how do I know that what you call conscience is

anything more than a superstitious feeling due to early training? And again, as I read history I see that many of the worst crimes in the past were done by men who thought that they were obeying their conscience. How do I know that my conscience will guide me better than theirs guided them? You see the difficulty? How does Christianity profess to deal with it?

I said last week that the essence of Christianity was loyalty. Now loyalty does two things. It makes obedience attractive and it gives an adequate motive for it. It makes obedience attractive, for it crowns duty with the diadem of love. I do not stop to argue about carrying out the wishes of any one I love. Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar was an appeal to the love of his men for their country. It begins with "England expects." So Christianity calls us to a life of obedience which is a life of gladness, because it is a life of loyalty. It tells us that the life of self-will is a blundering, stupid, ineffective life. The restful life, the effective life, is the life that obeys Jesus Christ.

Then also Christianity gives an adequate motive for obedience. It does not set up a marble statue of duty, reaching out cold arms, it touches us with a warm, sweet, human touch. I think if that young man who had

great possessions had been looking into the face of Jesus when He said the three last words of His command—" Come, follow Me "—he would have found it easy to go and sell all that he had. When a man has once accepted loyalty to Jesus Christ as the supreme motive of his life, he will want to have hard things to do. He will not ask how little he need obey—what are the easiest terms on which he can be enrolled. For how can I show my love and gratitude to Him in any other way than by the fulness of my obedience ?

I have pledged myself to be loyal to Christ. I have crowned Him as the king of my life. What follows ?

Well, first of all, a great desire to know what He would have me to do. That, you will remember, was St. Paul's first question when the power of personal loyalty conquered his life. " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? " And you will not find the answer in any easy formula. One or two things will be clear at once. You will know in a moment that you are bound to give up that particular habit ; to undertake that particular duty. And till you have done those things, nothing else will be clear. For it is the law of the Christian life that we learn by doing. But you will learn nothing till you really care. Show me a man whose supreme desire is to do every

day what Jesus Christ would have him do—that man will make mistakes, as the disciples did; he will fail, as the disciples failed; but he will live and learn and "rise on stepping stones of his dead self to higher things"; he will know the gladness of progress, the rest of self-surrender, he will reach at last

> "The ultimate angels' law
> Indulging every impulse of the soul
> There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing."

Do you care? That, at every stage of life, is the supreme question. Jesus Christ presented to the world a certain type of human character, a certain ideal of human conduct. If a man says, I do not admire this type of character, I do not approve this ideal of conduct—well, at least he is an honest man, and we can respect him. Somehow and somewhere he will have to be taught to respond to the moral beauty of Christ; but we must leave him to God. But the man about whom even God might despair is the man who calls himself a Christian, who is quite pleased with himself, and yet whose soul cleaveth to the dust; who would sell the moral ideal of Christianity, not for thirty pieces of silver, but for the paltry idulgence of the moment that leaves behind it the degradation of his whole character. "I

have failed a hundred times, I have brought dishonour to my master by my cowardice and compromise, shall I still dare to call myself a Christian?" Yes, if I still care, if I am prepared to start again, to be humble and self-distrustful; no, if I am content to settle down to lowered ideals and mean compromises.

There is something infinitely touching and beautiful in that scene by the lake side of Galilee when Jesus Christ met the disciple who had fallen so grievously in the hour of trial. There was no excuse, no explanation possible. Only this "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." How often we have to stand before Him, in the secret places where He meets us, with the same appeal "Lord, I have failed—failed beyond excuse or explanation, yet, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." My brothers, that is all that He wants from you or me—just the assurance of our loyalty. It is only when we can no longer give Him that, that real, irremediable failure begins.

But it may be answered that obedience to Jesus Christ is no easy matter, for He laid down no simple body of rules that a man can understand without question. That is true, and it is exactly this that tests our loyalty. A slave can obey a set of rules; but it is only when we care for a

man that we take the trouble to try to understand his wishes without the need of a specific command. You know how glad you are when your children do things that you wish them to do without having to be told every time. Loyalty will hear the unspoken wish, ponder the obscure saying till it becomes clear. And if even then it cannot understand, it will ask for fuller guidance. The one thing impossible to a loyal man is to call Jesus his Lord, and be content not to do the thing that He says.

Yet, after all, Jesus Christ gave some commands in language that defies misunderstanding. When He said " A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another " it is impossible for human language to be clearer. How can I possibly be loyal to Christ unless I am actively trying to obey that command ? Or again, when He said " Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature " He gave a perfectly clear statement of an elementary Christian duty. How can I possibly be loyal to Him if I am making no active personal effort to bring the claims of Jesus Christ before men ? Or, again, when He took bread and break it and gave it to them saying " Do this, in remembrance of Me " unless human language has no meaning He left it as a test of obedience that His disciples should meet

at Holy Communion. I cannot see how any man can claim that he is loyal to Jesus Christ if he is deliberately living in disobedience to that plain and simple command. Before we begin to complain about the obscurity of some of the commands of Christ, let us at least determine to obey those about which there can be no kind of doubt at all.

What we want most of all now is a body of Christian people, who will quietly and deliberately agree to take up the simple duty of obeying every command of Jesus Christ that they can understand. Read the early history of the Quaker movement two centuries and a half ago. The strength of the movement lay in its return to simple obedience. Jesus Christ taught men to love each other; therefore war must be wrong for a Christian man. Jesus Christ taught that our "yea" should be "yea"; therefore it must be wrong for a Christian man to take an oath. Jesus Christ taught simplicity of life; therefore we must try to live it. It was a noble effort, and the world is permanently better for it. We need just such another effort to-day. For the impeachment of modern Christianity is that it does not even attempt to obey. I do not think any one could seriously maintain that Christian people are more courteous, more considerate, more

humble, than those who do not call themselves Christians at all. There is no generally accepted Christian standard of conduct different from the standard of the ordinary social world. Now why is this? I think it is because we have not realized that religion means simply loyalty to Jesus Christ—the loyalty that expresses itself in obedience. You remember St. Paul's favourite name for himself—"Paul, the bondslave of Jesus Christ." Would any one ever think of calling us the bondslaves of Jesus Christ? Yet the only true freedom is the freedom of willing obedience. The man who fears God, it has been said, will never fear anything else. So the man who obeys Jesus Christ will never obey his own lower nature, his own selfish instincts.

You know the old phrase "the music of the spheres." It originated with the Greek Philosopher Pythagoras, who taught that the heavenly bodies as they revolved in orderly procession, were making music, which we might hear if our ears were trained to listen. The universe makes music because every part moves in obedience to a common law. And in the moral world human lives make music when all the faculties of their nature are moving in obedience to the mind and will of Jesus Christ.

I asked you last Sunday to agree with me that

loyalty is the essence of Christianity. To-day I want you to agree that the very first claim that loyalty makes on us is the claim to obedience. Jesus Christ left us a certain ideal of life—the ideal that He taught and lived. By every claim of loyalty I am bound to make it the supreme purpose of my life to find and follow that ideal. For I dare not give my life to anything less than the highest that I know, and the highest that I know is Christ.

III. Loyalty as the Ground of Sacrifice

"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."—
2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

In the *Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin puts first the lamp of sacrifice, which he defines as "the spirit which offers precious things, simply because they are precious, not as being necessary, but as an offering, surrendering, and sacrifice of what is to ourselves desirable." The spirit of sacrifice is therefore often apparently unreasonable. You remember the woman with a cruse of ointment and the comment of the disciples, "What waste!" That is still the comment of the man of the world. A poor church in the slums

gathers the gladly given coppers of the people to buy a beautiful altar frontal or fresco for its walls, and the man of the world says "What waste!" A young man fresh from the University goes out as a missionary to Africa, and dies before his work is well begun, and the man of the world says "What waste!" And so we find ourselves driven back again to the foundation of our faith. Is it all waste? Are the men who shun delights and live laborious days really fools after all? Have the midges who dance in the sunshine while it lists, and then die in the dusk at the end, really chosen the better part?

Man is a creature of twofold ancestry, and he brings with him instincts belonging to both the worlds from which he comes. From the brute world he brings the instinct of getting. Most animals are thieves by instinct, and it has been a long task to make mankind even outwardly honest. The brute in us still wants to get, to accumulate things. Now, like all the instincts of our animal nature, this instinct is necessary. It forms a stimulus to honest effort, it saves life from being a mere midge's dance. But, like all the instincts of our animal nature, it is dangerous. Just as drunkenness is the perversion of a perfectly harmless natural instinct, so covetousness is the perversion of a natural instinct. How can

a man be saved from covetousness? I said just now that we brought with us from the animal world the instinct of getting. Well, we bring with us from the spiritual world another instinct—the instinct of giving—the desire for opportunities of sacrifice. Whence does it come? It comes out of the very being of God. For it is the deepest truth about God that He is always giving, pouring out His life in prodigal fulness. And when a man has learned to give, he has learned to be like God. That is what St. John means when he says "He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." That does not mean that we ought to make it our object to get ourselves killed for the sake of others; but it does mean that every day we have to ask ourselves not, how can I get most to-day, but, how can I give most to-day to the uplifting and enriching of the great human family to which I belong?

The question we want to answer is this. How can a man find power to keep down the instinct of getting and develop the instinct of sacrifice? The answer I want to suggest is—by making loyalty to Christ the central purpose of his life.

Consider the case of patriotism—loyalty to one's country. We naturally think of it to-day, when the responsibilities of our imperial inherit-

ance are being recalled to our mind. What is the essence of patriotism? Not the waving of flags and the bawling of music-hall songs, not the arrogance that despises smaller and weaker nations, or the greed that cries for ever-extending frontiers. No, the essence of patriotism is loyalty, and therefore the language of patriotism is sacrifice. The spirit in which a man pays his rates and taxes is a much truer test of his patriotism that the vigour with which he sings "Rule Britannia." Tell me how much effort he is making to purge his national life from corruption, tell me how often and how earnestly he prays for his country, tell me how much it hurts him when his country's flag is besmirched by unworthy deeds, tell me what he gives for his country—and I will tell you how much right he has to the name of a patriot.

There are men to whom patriotism is almost a religion; indeed, at the time when Christianity began it was the only religion of the Roman Empire as a whole. It is the noblest thing, save one, in all human life, and I do not see how any man can be a real Christian without being a patriot, for he who loveth not his country. which he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? What, then is nobler than patriotism? I would answer, the loyalty of the Christian to

Jesus Christ. And why is it nobler? Because it reaches higher, it spreads wider, and it goes deeper. It reaches higher, for it carries our love and aspiration up to the very throne of God. Patriotism will lift a man above himself into noble and worthy things, but loyalty to Christ will lift a man higher still. It spreads wider, for the kingdom of Christ is larger than all the kingdoms of the world. By loyalty to my king I am brought into conscious fellowship with all those vast millions who will next month be sharers in the common gladness that will gather around the crowning of the king. So by loyalty to Christ I am brought into conscious fellowship with the great multitude that no man can number who stand before the throne of God and of the Lamb. And it goes deeper, for the claim that my country can make on me is limited. It has a right to claim my life, it can claim no more. But the claim of our heavenly king has no limit. My whole self, for ever, is His. When I re-awaken from the blank moment of death I expect my waking thought to be, I am still under the same authority; in this strange life into which I have come this one fact remains that Jesus Christ is my King. So I claim that loyalty to Christ is the deepest and strongest foundation for the law of sacrifice.

And the sacrifice of loyalty will have three characteristics.

1. It will be a willing sacrifice. Life brings to us all calls to sacrifice—calls that it is vain to resist. Whether we will or no, life is giving. But it does matter in what spirit we meet the demands for the surrender of what we love that life brings to us all. For character is made or marred at the forge of sacrifice. It is sadly possible for a man to give generously, and yet be no better for the giving. For behind the giving is the motive. "God so loved the world that He gave." The gift would have had no value apart from the love. There is a sense in which Milton is right when he says that God "needeth not, either man's gifts or his own self." But He does need man's loyal love, the love whose first instinct is to ask not, with how little can I escape, but how much will He take—have I anything great enough and pure enough to offer? All sacrifice may be sacrifice for Christ if we will have it so. Only remember, loyalty knows of no such thing as unwilling giving. For loyalty has given its all already, and every separate act of sacrifice is only paying an instalment of a claim that it rejoices to recognize. The one intolerable thing would be for a man to offer his life to Jesus Christ and for the offering to be ignored.

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Every day I am—

> "Happy that I can
> Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
> Not left in God's contempt apart
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize."

For while God asks me to give, I know that He has not rejected the poor and meagre offering that I brought Him when I gave Him myself.

2. It will be an unobtrusive sacrifice. The really loyal man always feels a sense of shame when he is praised for his loyalty. The very praise itself seems a kind of desecration. Remember Browning's Patriot :—

> "Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
> Me ? God might question ; now instead
> 'Tis God shall repay : I am safer so."

Our Lord told His disciples that service that asked for the praise of man had its reward. Let your sacrifice be a secret between you and God. For if our sacrifice is done in the public eye there is the appalling danger that we may come to be rather pleased with ourselves. There is one infallible remedy for any such danger. Enter into thy secret chamber, and when thou hast shut the door take out and lay before thee the act of sacrifice that pleased thee so well ; and then lay beside it some faint estimate of what Jesus Christ

gave for thee. And then I think there will not be much room for pride in that secret chamber. We all admire the man who does some brave thing and then, when the crowd gathers, slips quietly away. True loyalty has something of the same instinct of self-effacement.

3. It will be a constant sacrifice. Most men can rise to the idea of self-sacrifice occasionally, but the Christian life consists of the constant and habitual preference of the will of Christ above our own. But does that mean that we are never to enjoy ourselves, never to share the pleasures of life? No, in no wise. Wordsworth says—

> "It is my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes."

Yet consider the life history of the plants in your garden. Is not their whole life a life of giving? They drink in the rain, they climb up towards the sunshine, they draw their tribute from the earth. What for? To enjoy it? No, but to give in colour, in fragrance, in fruitfulness. And as soon as they have given all that they have to give they fade quietly, and go back into the brown earth from which they sprang. In the world of nature living and giving are the same thing. I am sure that loyalty to Christ is the best philosophy of life, even if you rule out all consideration

of everything beyond. For there is no more hopelessly discontented life than the life that is spent in getting, whether the thing we try to get is wealth or pleasure or anything else. But when a man has learnt to say, " Jesus Christ is my Lord : I have given my life to Him, I am trying to live for Him every day," that man has learned the true secret of happiness.

Many of the difficulties of our church life would be explained if we could only interpret life in terms of sacrifice. Take, for example, the question of church-going. Why should I go to church ? Can I not worship God quite as well on the golf course or on my allotment ? Well, we are justly angry with the man who will not stand to drink the king's health. Supposing that he replied that he can drink it quite as loyally sitting down or reclining at his ease. Do we admit his defence ? No, because loyalty must take trouble, must express itself in effort. So when I get up on Sunday morning and say I don't think I shall go to church to-day, is not the unwillingness to make the effort, to sacrifice enjoyment to duty, in just the same way, a lapse from loyalty ? The king's health always comes first wherever loyal Englishmen meet in friendly intercourse. Do you call that a mere form ? I call it much more. It is the recognition of a paramount

claim. It means that my country has the first right to whatever I can give in her service. There are men who imagine that they show their independence of spirit by ignoring these ceremonial acts. But independence is one thing and disloyalty quite another. What we mean when we drink the health of the king, or stand uncovered when the National Anthem is played, that we mean in another way when we come to church, and in a deeper way when we come to Holy Communion. And that we mean too when we bring our children to Holy Baptism that they may be enrolled as faithful soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ. There is a story told that an officer in the army attended one of Mr. Gough's temperance meetings, and when the speaker asked any who were willing to take the pledge to stand up, the officer rose to his feet. His doctor, who was sitting beside him, pulled his coat, whispering that he would risk injury to his health. "Sir," the officer answered, "I have faced death many times for my earthly king; shall I do less for my heavenly King?" It was a fine answer. Every loyal Englishmen will be prepared to sacrifice comfort and personal convenience in the service of his earthly sovereign; shall we do less for our heavenly King?

IV. Loyalty as the Basis of Fellowship

"All that believed were together and had all things common."—Acts ii. 44.

It is rather unfortunate that the word "believe" has come to represent an intellectual rather than a moral attitude, so that when we read a verse like this it conveys the idea of a body of people united by certain opinions in which they agreed. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that you can ever make common opinions a real bond of union. There must always be something more, and it is exactly that something more that is included in the Bible idea of faith, and has partly dropped out of our ideas of it. For that something more is loyalty. Belief in Jesus Christ does not mean a cold process of intellectual conviction, but a warm act of personal devotion.

> "Believe—and our whole argument breaks up.
> Enthusiasm's the best thing, I repeat;
> And be it a mad dream, or God's very breath,
> The fact's the same—belief's fire once in us,
> Makes of all else mere stuff to show itself."

The bond of union of the Christian society was only this—"Jesus Christ is Lord." Everything else—doctrines, organization, discipline—followed. Loyalty to Christ came first.

If some historian of the distant future at-

tempted to explain how the British Empire held together in the twentieth century he would have to take account of two influences—the influence of common interests and the influence of a common loyalty. But since the power of common interests lies obvious on the surface of things, he might easily lose sight of the other influence. For the extent to which common loyalty helps to hold together our Empire is not easy to estimate. The cynical man will be disposed to estimate its value very low, but in this the cynic will be wrong, as, indeed, he always is. It is quite certain that common loyalty to a common head does form one of the strongest bonds of union of the Empire. We felt it last year in the realization of a common sorrow, as the funeral march rolled round the world. We shall feel it next month, please God, in the realization of a common gladness as voices in all the ends of the earth join in the prayer "God Save the King." National life is strongest when it is based on a common loyalty. And what loyalty to the sovereign is in the life of the Empire, that, and far more, loyalty to Jesus Christ is in the Christian society.

The one thought that I want to press on your minds now is this—that you can never build up a Church that will endure on any other foundation.

If you try to build your Church on a foundation of common opinions, then it follows that there must be as many churches as there are varieties of opinions, which is very much the condition into which we have been in danger of drifting in this country. Or, again, if you try to build your Church on a foundation of common organization, then your Church becomes a prison instead of a home. Or if you try to build your Church on the foundation of a common goodness of character, then your Church will have no welcome for the sinful and the needy whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. So, from the first, men entered the Christian society by baptism, for baptism was simply the profession of loyalty to Jesus Christ. And I do not see how we can deny the name of Church to any body of men united together by the bond of common loyalty to Jesus Christ. It is inevitable that we should differ as to what is involved in that pledge of loyalty. To me it seems perfectly clear that loyalty to Christ involves my receiving my commission to act as a Christian minister from the Bishop who represents for me the authority of the Christian society given first by Christ Himself. And so believing, I cannot conceive that any one has a right to ask of me that I should surrender these convictions, for no true re-union can begin with a

demand for disloyalty. But if I am asked to force my own conception of loyalty to Christ on those who differ from me, and deny the name of Church to every body of Christians who do not accept it, I must decline. I think that the time may come when we shall ask ourselves—all of us —whether this difference in the interpretation that we give to the meaning of loyalty justifies our remaining separated from each other. Certainly the only path to real re-union is not the path of compromise or weak mutual concession, but the fuller recognition of the supreme duty that rests on every man to be loyal to what he believes to be the mind of Christ. But now let us ask ourselves a pertinent question. Why am I a churchman? Is it from habit, or early training or a vague feeling of the fitness of things? Or is there under all these things a deeper motive—the love of Christ constraining me? That is the only motive for union that will stand the strain of life. A churchman who is a churchman because he wants to express his loyalty to Christ will not desert his Church whenever he cannot get his own way, he will not be content to be in the outer circle of adherents, he will want to dare the whole venture, give his whole self to the cause.

At our baptism we were sworn in as faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ. But it belongs to the

idea of a soldier that he shall be enrolled in a society, a regiment. An isolated volunteer acting under no authority but his own would be a danger rather than a strength to the cause of national defence. So if a patriotic man wants to take his share in the duty of defending the nation we do not merely give him a gun and a uniform, we enlist him in the Territorial Army, where he learns how to act with other men for common purposes. And so loyalty to king and country creates loyalty to comrades and commanders. In just the same way the Christian man enrolls himself in a society, a regiment of the great army of Jesus Christ. And loyalty to Christ creates loyalty to our fellow-churchmen. A loyal man will be jealous for the honour of his regiment.

I remember hearing a story of how two men were discussing the South African War in a London public-house and speaking rather contemptuously of one of the commanding officers, when a quiet man sitting in the corner arose and smote them both; and when challenged simply replied "I served under him." The method may have been wrong, but the spirit was right—a man must maintain the honour of his comrades in arms. I wonder whether we churchmen are always as careful as we ought to be about loyalty to each other. Do we resolutely believe the best

of each other? Are we sufficiently conscious, under all our differences, of the common loyalty that obliges us to stand together? If you read the records of the early Church you will find how those who watched the Christian society from outside noted this as the most striking characteristic of those early followers of Jesus Christ. So, for example, the scoffer Lucian says of the Christians, "Their original lawgiver has taught them that they are all brethren, one of another. They become incredibly alert when anything occurs that affects their common interests. On such occasions no expense is grudged." Another heathen writer, Caecilius, reports, "They recognize each other by means of secret marks and signs, and love one another almost before they are acquainted." It is needless to multiply examples.

The earliest extant Christian writing after the books of the New Testament is the beautiful letter of Clement, of Rome, to the Corinthian Church. I wish you could all read it. It is a passionate appeal from the Roman Church to its sister Church at Corinth for loyalty. It begins with a picture of the early days before discord had begun. "You were sincere and simple and free from malice one towards another. Every sedition and every schism was abominable to you. Ye mourned over the transgressions of your

neighbours; ye judged their shortcomings to be your own." But these days were passed, and the Roman Church pleads with the Corinthian Church to recall them. So, in those early days, the little companies of Christians tried to help each other to be loyal to Christ and to His gospel and brotherhood.

We have moved far since those days. We are larger, richer, more secure, more respected than those little companies who met to break bread in obscure rooms down back streets, never safe from molestation or ridicule. Are we correspondingly more loyal? If not, neither wealth nor security will save us from losing all effective power of witness. A churchman disloyal to his Church is like salt that has lost its savour—henceforth good for nothing; and a Church that is disloyal to Jesus Christ is like the great star falling from heaven that the prophet saw in the book of Revelation, that embittered the waters where it fell.

But we need not close with such pessimistic forebodings. I am quite certain that the idea of loyalty to Jesus Christ is being re-awakened to men's minds; that Christian men are drawing together through their common loyalty; that even the world outside is challenging us to be true to our pledge of obedience. I know that the

Church of the future will not fence her altars against any man who claims to draw near with faith—the faith that is only another name for loyalty. I know that the question that we shall ask men in those larger and happier days will not be, How fully do you believe the Athanasian Creed? but, how much do you love Jesus Christ? And when I ask myself what part our own Church will have in that larger Church of the future, my answer is "It is for you, the churchmen of to-day, to answer that question."

I do not want you to misunderstand me. I do not mean that it is a matter of no importance whether we accept the historic faith or not. I do not believe that the Church of the future will be a Church without a creed, as some men hope. But I do mean that our attitude towards the historic faith depends on what Professor James calls the "will to believe." And our will to believe grows out of our loyalty to the Christian ideal, which means our loyalty to Jesus Christ. No man can adopt an attitude of impartiality towards Christianity. You may adopt an attitude of indifference, which is quite a different thing. But directly you begin to interest yourself in Christianity you are bound to become conscious that it makes a moral claim on you—that it asks for moral sympathy—for loyalty. The loyal

man is not a man who has made up his mind to dispense with all reasonable evidence for what he believes; but he is a man who has taken up the right attitude from which to approach the evidence.

Who do you think knows you best—your friends or indifferent outsiders? It is the rule of all personal life that we must love in order truly to know. There is no other way. So I say, let us have our creed by all means, but do not mistake acceptance of the creed for the personal loyalty that makes a man a Christian. For if once we agree that loyalty to Christ is the supreme thing, we find ourselves in a larger world. I can reach out to all kinds of men, with whose opinions I disagree, on the ground of our common loyalty. Any man who is a friend of Christ must be my friend. And because he is my friend I want him inside the family circle; I want him at our Father's table; I want to give sacramental expression to our fellowship. So loyalty always gathers and unites and binds together. Unity of opinion there never will be while men have minds of their own; but just as in the political world great crises, or times of national rejoicing, bring out the deeper unities that lie beneath all differences, so in the world of religious thought surely the tremendous problems of our own time ought

to call out in us all a deeper sense of the unity of all who accept loyalty to Jesus Christ as the supreme motive power of their lives.

Obedience, sacrifice, fellowship—these are the three permanent needs of every human life ; for obedience is the only way to real freedom, and sacrifice is the only way to true gladness, and fellowship is the only way to self-realization. And obedience, sacrifice, and fellowship all grow naturally in a life that finds its supreme good in simple loyalty to Jesus Christ.

III

SOME PHASES OF MODERN THOUGHT [1]

I. Socialism

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel."—Jer. xxxi. 31.

I AM going to say something to you in this course of sermons on Christianity and some modern alternatives. Manifestly, therefore, we must begin by understanding what we mean by Christianity. What I mean by it is a system of thought and action established by the disciples of Christ acting, as they believed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If I want to know whether anything is Christian, I ask myself: Would the writers of the New Testament have recognized it as a natural development of what they taught and believed? The writers of the New Testament form a kind of permanent jury before which teachers of new things must appear if they claim for their wares the name of Christian.

We are going to bring to this test several of

[1] Preached at St, Michael's church, Coventry.

the prevalent forms of modern thought, and to-night I begin with Socialism.

But notice at the outset that I am dealing with Socialism as a form of religious thought. Socialism means many things—it is a word used in many senses—but the Socialism of which I am thinking is more than an economic theory: it has a creed, an inspiration, a gospel. Perhaps it is commoner abroad than in England, because continental Socialism rests on a more philosophical basis there than is generally the case in England. But even here there are thousands of people to whom Socialism is what Christianity is to the Christian—a way of life, a gospel of hope. And though there are Christian Socialists among us, the normal attitude of many of our leading socialists towards Christianity is one of indifference and sometimes of active hostility.[1] Now in judging any system of thought, we must learn to look at it from two points of view: from the point of view of the end it seeks and from the point of view of the methods by which it seeks to reach that end. Let us apply this to Socialism. What is the end that Socialism seeks? The socialist looks out on modern industrial and economic life in Western Europe and sees it not as an effectively organized system, but as a

[1] This is becoming less true every year.

chaotic struggle that constantly tends to lapse back to the law of the beast. He sees men acting as though rivalry and enmity were the natural relation of man to man, as though it was a Divine law that the prosperity of the few could only be purchased by the sacrifice of the many. And seeing these things, he declares that the time has come for a new attempt to organize human relations on a sounder basis—to lift mankind from the methods of a mob to the methods of an army. For ages Western Europe was organized on a definite plan. Whatever may be said of Feudalism, at least it was an attempt, and for a time a successful attempt, so to organize human society that every man should have his place and work in an organic whole. It was only with the breakdown of Feudalism that there came the need for the Poor Law in England, and private ownership of land, and the slow decay of the yeoman class. Feudalism was based on a definite principle—the principle of privilege and responsibility, descending from above through all classes of the community. And the death-blow to Feudalism was struck when it became possible for men to keep their privileges while they repudiated their responsibilities. Now the socialist desires to see national life organized on another principle, the principle of equality of opportunity,

"To every man his chance, to every man his work, to every man his reward."

Do you not see that in all this the socialist is seeking ends that are essentially Christian? When St. Paul saw human society as a body having many members, each performing its own office for the life of the whole—when St. John saw the new earth wherein dwelt righteousness —what did they mean but just this organization of human lives into an organic society where each should be for all and all for each, and where the common good should be the supreme motive for human action?

Yes. The ends that Socialism seeks are the ends that Christ came to make possible. For you must judge Socialism by its wisest, not by its wildest. It is as unfair to judge Socialism by the reckless foolishness of some of its newspapers as it would be to judge our own English Church by the utterances of our Church papers. It may be safely asserted of any great cause that it is nobler than the journals that advocate it.

The ideal of Socialism is the ideal of Christianity. The socialist claims to be the friend of the poor—will he dare to deny that title to our Lord Jesus Christ? The socialist is the enemy of irresponsible wealth, can he say anything stronger than such words of Christ's as these—

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" the socialist believes that men were meant to be brothers, not enemies. Christ habitually treated them as being so. Need I go on? You can carry on the comparison for yourselves. I will make bold to tell any socialist who is here to-night that the ideal that has given its inspiration to the thousands of men and women who are to-day enrolled in the ranks of Socialism is the ideal of the Christ Whom many of them either repudiate or ignore.

Why, then, are we not all socialists? To find the answer to that question we must look from the ends to the means. How does the socialist hope to achieve this larger good? The answer is, by a reconstruction of the machinery of industrial life, by appealing from the selfishness of the individual to the moral instinct of the whole body. Under a reconstructed system of industrial life, by which the control of national industry is taken over by the State, every man will, it is asserted, have his chance, the passions of greed and selfishness and envy will have no scope for exercise, and will die out of human society.

Now, it is futile for us to meet a carefully considered scheme like this with mere declamatory outbreaks like Lord Rosebery's recent declara-

tion, that Socialism is the end of everything. Here, at least is a solution for the diseases of the body politic propounded by men who do sincerely believe what they advocate. We might at least learn to treat their proposals with respect.

But what are we to say of them? Why this, I think. That the evil that lies at the heart of modern life is a moral evil, and will only be driven out by a moral conqueror. So Christianity meets the social evils of our time, not with the prayer "Renew right institutions around me," but with the prayer "Renew a right spirit within me."

Our Lord in His public teaching said singularly little about the outward forms of organized life. It is untrue to say that He said nothing. His denunciations of the Pharisees include their economic methods as well as their religious practices; and the Sermon on the Mount has in it all the foundations of a true social life. Yet it remains true that the primary interest of Christ was the individual. He came, first of all, to change men's hearts.

This is the thought in the mind of the prophet whose words I read you just now. There had been a covenant between God and the people. It had been, so to speak, an external covenant—it had to do with the organization of national

life. And it had failed. Now, says the prophet, God is going to make a new covenant with you, a covenant that has to do not with organization and ceremonial, but with character, with the law written in the mind and heart, with the knowledge of God growing up from within.

Think of it thus. If by the wave of some magician's wand you could bring about the re-organization of society that Socialism desires, would you really have solved the problem of human life? If you made it no longer possible for the few to oppress the many, what guarantee could you provide against the many oppressing the few? And since in the long run it is the oppressor and not the oppressed who pays to God the price of oppression, the last state of the nation might be worse than the first. But is there one man in this church to-night who doubts that if by the wave of some magician's wand we could take away the stony heart out of men's flesh, could endow them with a Christian character and an enthusiasm for the Christian ideal, there would not be left one of all the problems that now weigh down men's lives? How could municipal corruption and apathy live in a council of really Christian men? How could drunkenness or slum dwellings, or gambling, or hungry children, or sweated labour—how could these things live in a com-

munity that not only professed, but possessed the spirit of Christ?

But I know the answer to all this. It will be said that Christianity has been in the world for nearly two thousand years, and that at the end of it all it has failed. What shall we answer? If we are honest men there is only one possible answer. It is true. But why has it failed? It has failed just for this reason that it is not Christian. It has failed not because it has obeyed the teaching of Christ, but because there are whole areas of life in which His teaching has never come.

How has this happened? I think largely for this reason, that we never really think out Christianity for ourselves. Take the ordinary churchman. He has been accustomed to attend church regularly from childhood. He has inherited certain religious ideas that are very real to him. The ordered beauty of Anglican ritual means for him a real spiritual help. He probably has family prayers at home. But in actual business life he scarcely ever dreams of asking what the Christian ideal demands. Of course this is not universally true; there are men who make large sacrifices in the effort to apply Christian principles to business life; but they are lamentably rare. Or, again, can any one seriously contend that any

particle of real Christianity enters into the diplomatic relations of the nations of Western Europe.

I need not labour these points. The thing I want you to see is that there are whole areas of life as yet absolutely unchristianized, and that the very idea of Christianizing them will only provoke in the minds of many good churchmen a sneer of scornful incredulity.

Yet they must be Christianized if ever the religion of Jesus Christ is to have a fair chance of showing what it can do. So the message for us to-day is just the same as the message brought by St. Paul to Athens long ago, "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And if we will not heed the call, but are content to go on still in fancied security, it may be that the next message will be to us, as to Jerusalem of old, "Thy kingdom shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

It need not be so, if only we are willing to learn and go forward. But the growth of Socialism is a warning to us that we have no time to lose. For Socialism, apart from the Christian ideal of personal character, might prove a colossal disaster. But in a community in which the Christian idea was paramount it would matter little whether the State directly controlled the national indus-

trial organization, or whether, as I think would be more likely, many intermediate forms of organization grew up between the State and the individual.

So I would say to any non-Christian socialist who is here, We are both in danger of failing—you, because you do not believe in the transforming power of the Christian idea, we because we do not manifest that transforming power in our lives. Do not let us waste the brief day in idle recriminations. Your place is with us. You can bring to us social ideals that we have too often forgotten, an enthusiasm for the common good that self-interest has too often stifled. And we can give you that without which any true Socialism must be for ever impossible, the power of a Divine life given for us that it may be given to us, the strength that comes of the conviction that " no work begun shall ever pause for death," the sacrament that welcomes our children into the great society, the feast that gathers us as brothers at our Father's table. And as, like children who have lost our way, we join hands and look up to our Father for light, there shall shine before us, no longer obscured in mists of misunderstanding, the pure white summit of the Christian ideal that we must climb together.

For the true ideal of Christianity is not the

separate perfecting of the individual, but the fulfilment of the individual life in the life of a redeemed humanity "until we all come unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ."

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying: 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and the Lord Himself shall be with them and be their God.'

"'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

II. The New Theology

"He shall save His people from their sins."—St. Matt. i. 21.

I WANT to say something to-night about the "New Theology." In reality it is not a new theology at all; it is as old as Christianity, and older. But the name conveniently represents a tendency of modern thought which has been

the outcome of the effort to reconcile Science with Theology. This New Theology starts with the assertion that God is all, that there is no other reality but God, that you and I are part of God. In a word it is—or at least tends to be—Pantheistic. Now the danger of Pantheism is that it represents a real truth mis-stated. It is true that "in Him we live and move and have our being"; that—

> "He dwells in all
> From life's minute beginnings up to man."

But it is also true that the universe is not God; that you and I are not God; that though nature may be "the visible garment of God," yet "they shall perish, but Thou remainest; they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

There is one particular result of this pantheistic conception of God that I want you to consider to-night: its bearing on the problem of sin. The New Theology always tends to explain away sin. It regards the attitude of St. Paul or St. Augustine towards sin as morbid. Sin is a mere illusion, a shadow. It will all come right, and the best thing we can do is to ignore it. Now,

it is quite true that at certain ages a morbid feeling about sin has been a real danger. If you or I took to reading medical books we might grow morbidly interested in diseases till we fancied we had every disease that we read about. So a man may brood over sin till he loses all true sense of proportion. Yet no student of the Bible can think of sin as an unimportant element in the history of the world. The philosopher may explain away sin, but the historian knows it as an influence checking and hindering human progress ; the social reformer knows it as the power that baffles his efforts for social good ; the mother knows it as the mysterious enemy that she must fight in her children. And the secret of the appeal that Christianity made to men was that it took hold of this problem of sin and recognized it and realized it, and claimed to be able to heal it. It was as though humanity lay in a hospital ward, and doctor after doctor came to examine the patient. And one said, " Existence is an illusion ; cease to wish to be at all, and your sufferings will cease." And another said, " Your disease is an illusion ; cease to believe that you are ill, and you will be ill no longer." And then Christ came and bent over sick humanity and said, " I know your disease, it is very real and very dangerous. Your life is enfeebled and con-

taminated; I bring you a gift of life fresh from the Fountain of all life. Let the old life die, and take the real life that I give you—rise up and live."

"Sin," say the leaders of the New Theology, "is selfishness." And they are right, for sin is the opposite of love, and love is the infinite giving of ourselves. Sin is the desire to make others minister to us. Christianity is following in the footsteps of the Son of Man Who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. But how does the New Theology hope to cure sin? By persuading men that true happiness is found not in selfishness but in service. But can you cure disease by telling a man that it is happier to be well than to be sick?

How does Christianity hope to cure sin? First by showing us sin as it really is. Just as a drunken man in the senseless anger of intoxication may strike down his own child, and then be suddenly sobered by the shock of the realization of what he has done, so a man is suddenly awakened to the true meaning of sin as he looks at the Cross and Him Who hangs thereon. For we know, alas, only too well we know, that the same spirit that consummated that great tragedy lives still in us, that we, too, might find ourselves

joining in the cry "Crucify Him" when some inconvenient truth starts up suddenly to claim our allegiance.

Go back in thought to that Jerusalem of nearly nineteen centuries ago. Are you quite sure that you would have stood with St. John under the shadow of that Cross and not joined with the crowd of careless gazers or the rulers who mocked Him as He hung there? Are you quite sure that if He came again and walked our streets you would be one of His disciples? We cannot think of the Cross without asking ourselves such questions as these. And so the Cross helps us to know ourselves, to recognize how under the surface of these respectable lives of ours the old love of self, the old hatred of the call to sacrifice, still lives. It is sometimes appalling to turn the searchlight into our own inner selves, and see how much that is foul and un-Christlike still haunts the recesses of our life.

But the Cross does not only make us recognize sin: it makes us hate sin. I can never cherish hatred in my heart without remembering the bitter hate that gathered in the judgment hall to condemn Him Who was Love; I can never lose my temper without being haunted by the vision of the white faces, distorted with passion, that hurled their execrations at the crucified; I can

never share in some dirty trick in commercial life without remembering the thirty pieces of silver and the man who betrayed Christ.

And after realization and hatred comes deliverance. "He shall save His people from their sins." But how does He save them? The philosopher tells us that we are strong enough to overcome sin if we choose, that each man may be his own saviour if he will. But Christianity says that a man is saved when he looks away from himself to Christ, when he identifies himself with Christ, when he opens his life to receive the life-giving power that is for ever flowing forth from the ascended Saviour.

Are these things mere phrases, having no real meaning? Our answer is an appeal to experience. This is the only gospel that has shown its power of transforming men's lives. For, remember, Christianity claims to be tested by its power over the degraded, the outcast, the fallen, "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," "to seek and to save that which was lost." If you want to test the power of the Christian gospel you must try it not on self-satisfied people, "the ninety-nine that need no repentance," you must take it to the man who is almost in despair over his own inability to resist temptation; you must preach it to the

people who not only join every Sunday in confessing that they "have erred and strayed like lost sheep" but who really believe it and grieve over it.

All this means that Christianity has lost its power over modern thought largely through the loss of any adequate consciousness of sin among us. And this inadequate consciousness of sin is partly due to that idea about God that lies at the basis of the New Theology. The Christian view of God started from a different beginning.

We meet it at the very opening of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." There is a will and mind that exists behind and independently of all created things, a will and mind that has given to man the power to hold communion with Itself. When I worship God I am not worshipping myself, but reaching out of myself towards the source of my life, as a flower reaches out towards the sun. And sin is not injury to the Divine in me, but wrong done to the love of my Father in heaven. And what I hope for beyond death is, not to be reabsorbed in the all-pervading Essence from which I sprang, but to find at the heart of the universe the great society in which each man becomes his true self as he identifies himself with the Infinite Love in the gladness of self-oblation. And to think thus

of God is the only way to get a true conception of sin. For sin is simply the spirit which says to the Father, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Let me live my life for myself. And the sinfulness of sin depends not on its effect on us, or even on human society, but on the fact that every man stands in a special and personal relation towards God, as the children of a family do to their father.

So, in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see the Father's arms stretched out to bring humanity back to Him. Christ Jesus cannot save us from our sins if He is only one of ourselves. He can save us because He brings God back to us again, because He reveals to us not only our own failure, but also the secret of success.

It is right that philosophy should occupy itself with the problems of religion, and we are grateful to every thoughtful man who will tell us what and why he believes. Christianity has everything to gain by coming out into the daylight. But we must not mistake for Christianity every modern system of thought that incorporates elements of Christianity. From the days in which the Church fought her earliest fight with Gnosticism such phases of thought have arisen again and again, claiming to be improved and purified

forms of Christianity. Why has Christianity survived them all? Surely the answer is, because Christianity meets human needs that these alternative systems leave unsatisfied. We can learn much from them—and willingness to learn belongs to the child-like spirit that Christ urged on His disciples—but our commission stands unrepealed; "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness, but to us who believe, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The language of our preaching must change from age to age, but the content remains the same. Phrases and formulas lose their meaning and the unchanging truth reclothes itself in new language, but still men ask for deliverance from sin, for restoration of the lost consciousness of God, and still our answer must be the same: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

Let us close with a practical question. Christianity is not a philosophy, but a gospel. Is it a gospel to you? Can you fall back on the test of experience and say that you are proving the power of Jesus Christ to save you from your sins—from pride and selfishness, from the lusts of the flesh, from all bitterness and wrath and malice? That is what Christianity means—the lifting up

of lives out of all that is mean and base and ignoble into fellowship with God, that we may go out with God for the salvation of the world.

III. Christian Science

"I am the Lord that healeth thee."—Exod. xv. 26.

The growth of Christian Science has been a remarkable fact in the religious history of our own time. It belongs to that general reaction against materialism that began towards the end of last century, and is gradually gathering impetus as this century proceeds. And it belongs also to that characteristic that our age shares with ancient Athens—the desire for novelty. What, then, is Christian Science? There are a few simple truths that lie at the basis of all religious systems that are of any value—that God is the Supreme Reality; that union with God is man's supreme good; that sin belongs to an order of things that must inevitably pass away. Such truths as these are the common material of all religions that deserve the name; and these are the truths that the founder of Christian Science has reasserted. In the authoritative expositions of the community these doctrines are wrapped up in a curious metaphysical system that constantly reminds me of the specu-

lative systems of the Gnostic teachers of the second century. It is derived from the same source—from an admixture of Oriental philosophy, Stoic theories and Christian teaching, and it includes the same familiar ideas: that matter is an illusion and mind the only reality, that salvation is achieved by the power of thought, that dependence on external things is the indication of undeveloped religious consciousness. But after all it is the practical side of Christian Science that has done most to give it the vogue that it has in America and in this country. It has been a real gospel to thousands in this neurotic, luxurious, pleasure-loving age. For it has preached the old truth that the mind can and should control the body, that much of the suffering of the world is really due to want of this self-control. So it has taught people to give up worrying, spending their time in being sorry for themselves and thinking about their own health. It has reasserted the truth that salvation means health of the whole man.

But all this is no new gospel. Only it is a gospel that had strangely dropped out of our Church life. To "heal the sick" was part of the commission of Christ to His disciples. And we learn from St. James that the custom of anointing the sick—not as extreme unction in view of imme-

diate death, but anointing as a solemn declaration of God's healing power—was well known in those early days. There are many of us who would like to see it restored to its place in the system of the Church. The fact is, that what has happened so often in the history of the Church has happened again—that a truth that the Church has neglected has been reasserted from outside. We have taught the doctrine of resignation in such a way as to undermine the initiative powers of the soul, till torpid endurance has seemed the highest good. And can we wonder that men are attracted by a religious system that teaches them actively to identify themselves with the supreme good?

Yet in three important directions at least Christianity and Christian Science are, if I rightly understand them, completely at variance.

I. Christianity believes that there is nothing dishonouring to God in the use of all that human research has placed at the disposal of humanity for the healing of disease; nay, rather, that only as we use all human means that God has provided can we commit the whole issue to Him. We are told that He Who feeds the ravens will not suffer His children to lack, and that promise ought to deliver me from needless worrying. But it does not deliver me from the obligation of taking

every means to supply food for myself and my family ; it does not justify me in sitting down at a bare breakfast table, and saying that as matter has no real existence I need not eat ! For God, the Supreme Good, has chosen that men should be " bound together in the bundle of life " by the bond of mutual service. No wise doctor ignores or under-estimates the influence of the mind of his patient as an asset in the work of healing. He knows that he can only—as the phrase goes —" help Nature." And if he is a Christian doctor he kneels down every day and thanks God for the privilege of serving Him by ministering, through the skill that He has given, to the bodily needs of men.

II. Christianity differs wholly from Christian Science in its teaching about matter. " Matter," says Christian Science, " is an illusion." " Matter," says Christianity, " is the visible garment of God." Christianity begins with an incarnation—a taking by the Godhead Himself of flesh, of a true human body under true human conditions ; and it is carried forward in a sacramental system that perpetually reasserts the intimate relation of the material to the spiritual ; and the consummation to which it looks forward is the resurrection of the body, and in that resurrection the deliverance of creation from the bondage of

corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. Matter an illusion! A dream of mortal mind! Then, thank God for the mortal mind that dreamed the daisy and the harebell, the purple glory of heather hills, the glowing colours of autumn woods, that made the sky glorious with stars and the earth glad with the smiles of little children. If we are going to throw on matter the responsibility for the burden and suffering of the world, what shall we say of all the beauty and joy of the world that came through the form of material things. I wish I could say more about this, but I want to pass on to the third point of divergence—the Christian view of suffering.

III. Every deep thinker since the world began has felt the burden of the problem of human suffering, of its unequal distribution, of its apparent injustice. No religion can hope to meet the real needs of men unless it can do something at least to lighten the burden. The answer of Christian Science is that suffering cannot be real, because God, the only reality, cannot feel suffering; that suffering is the outcome of mortal mind that is itself an illusion. What is the answer of Christianity? That suffering has been, once for all, interpreted by the Incarnation. "God cannot suffer?" Yet suffering has something corre-

sponding to it in the Divine nature, for suffering at its highest is the shadow cast by love. But if God could enter into and share human conditions, keeping the fulness of perfect love, and setting aside, in His human nature, the fulness of perfect knowledge—what then? The gospel story is your answer. The Captain of our salvation was "made perfect through suffering."

What has the life of our Lord Jesus Christ taught us about suffering?

I. It has for ever given the lie to the cruel doctrine that special suffering is the result of special sin. Nay, it has taught the opposite truth. "He that is near Me is near the fire" is an apocryphal saying of Christ. If you want to avoid suffering, do not follow Christ. For He will make your heart so tender that it will ache with sympathy for others; He will make your conscience so sensitive that sin will be like the dropping on raw flesh of some biting acid; He will make your ideals so high that you will grieve over your failure to reach them. You must leave the old, self-satisfied, comfortable life behind; you must be prepared to defy public opinion if He so require. "For the joy set before you" you, too, must endure the cross, despising the shame.

II. It has taught us how suffering develops character. Suffering may make a man hard, bitter and selfish. But often it does just the opposite. It is one of the most wonderful experiences in the world to watch the unfolding in some human character, under the discipline of suffering, of unsuspected qualities of kindliness and unselfishness. It is an undeniable fact that the world's great sufferers have often been the world's great saints. It is not only the Captain, but His followers, too, who are "made perfect through suffering."

III. And then the life of Christ has taught us the redeeming power of suffering. "The pleasures of each generation," says Dr. Illingworth, "evaporate in air; it is their pains that increase the spiritual momentum of the world." Look back over human history at every stage; it is where men suffer that progress is going on. "Where pain ends, gain ends too." Often as I hold up the chalice at the moment of consecration, and say "This is My blood" there comes before me a kind of vision of all the blood, the red wine of sacrifice, poured out on earth since human life began. And as I drink of the consecrated wine I seem to be claiming the benefit of all that outpouring of human life. It has all gone to make the world that I have inherited.

" God said to man and woman, ' By thy sweat
And by thy travail thou shalt conquer earth :
Not by thy ease or pleasure—and no good
Or glory of this life but comes by pain.'
How poor were earth if all its martyrdoms,
If all its struggling signs of sacrifice
Were swept away, and all were satiate—smooth ;
If this were such a heaven of soul and sense
As some have dreamed of—and we human still."

I know of no finer statement of the Christian doctrine of suffering than the poem from which these lines are taken—Mrs. King's " Sermon in the Hospital." Read it for yourselves, and see whether it does not offer a nobler conception of life than that which is based on the idea that suffering has no real meaning or purpose ?

And yet—here is the paradox of Christianity —while we recognize the Divine purpose of suffering, we are pledged to fight against suffering. For the unavoidable suffering of the world we throw the responsibility on God ; but for the avoidable suffering He throws the responsibility on us. The needless cruelty that massacres God's little feathered friends that their plumage may decorate women's hats is not God's act, but men's. " Not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father's knowledge." The needless suffering of industrial processes that might be dispensed with ; the needless suffering inflicted

by our present Poor Law system; the needless suffering of children in drunken homes—all the needless wrong and cruelty of the world; all this is a challenge to the Christian. For all needless suffering is the result of sin—of the collective sin of the community that is not alive to what it does. And just in proportion as we realize these things do we enter into fellowship with the purpose of Christ, Who came to die that He might overcome death, and to suffer that He might destroy suffering.

Both these lines of thought bring us back to the thought of spiritual healing. In the first English Prayer Book, only about ten years before our present one, a special service for "Unction for the sick" was provided. Let me read you the beginning of it: "As with this visible oil thy body outwardly is anointed, so our Heavenly Father, Almighty God, grant of His infinite goodness that thy soul inwardly may be anointed with the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of all strength, comfort, relief and gladness. And vouchsafe, for His great mercy (if it be His blessed will) to restore unto thee thy bodily health and strength, to serve Him; and send thee release of all thy pains, troubles and diseases, both of body and soul." The right to ask from God for health of body as well as for health of soul is one

the Church ought never to have allowed to lapse. As in all our prayers, the human will must be called into exercise to co-operate with the Divine; and as in all our prayers, the possibility that God willeth otherwise must not be ignored or forgotten. But a certain definite committing of our bodies to God, a certain definite calling into exercise of the deeper spiritual forces of our nature, would transform thousands of so-called invalids into happy and efficient workers. This is the truth that underlies Christian Science; the pity is that those who believe it cannot claim their place in the Catholic Church, and bring their contribution of faith in the healing power of God to enrich the life of the Christian society. But part of the meaning of the name "Catholic" is that the Christian Church must be willing to welcome truth from whatever source it comes. To some of us the metaphysics of Christian Science seem neither fresh nor convincing. But because it starts from God, and appeals to its members to realize more fully the reality of His Presence it has helped many people out of the slough of materialism. It has a truth to teach—even though it may be an imperfect truth—and for this we may thank God.

> "Our little systems have their day:
> They have their day, and cease to be;

They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

So we come back to Him again as we sing our closing hymn together—

"Thy touch has still its ancient power;
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all."

IV. Spiritualism

"The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God and there shall no torment touch them."—Wisdom iii. 1.

Spiritualism—by which I mean the effort to establish communication with the dead—is probably as old as the human race. It represents not only the insatiable curiosity that is the primitive germ of the modern passion for research but also the deep instinct that rebels against the separation of death. But modern Spiritualism is a recent development, dating back less than a hundred years. It is important to distinguish clearly between two things—between psychical research pursued in the interests of science, and Spiritualism as a religious system. All phenomena are legitimate subjects for scientific inquiry. We must not repeat the mistake of the churchmen of the Middle Ages, who condemned Galileo because he said that the earth went round

the sun. Psychical phenomena exist; we ask our men of science to tell us what they mean.

But because the chemist has to investigate the properties of poisons he does not, therefore, give them to his children to play with. It is one thing to investigate psychic phenomena with the careful reverence of scientific inquiry; it is quite another to issue handbills inviting every passer by to come and share "the free gospel of Spiritualism." But what is this free gospel of Spiritualism? Does it tell us that our dead are "not dead, but alive"? Well, Christianity told us that long ago. Does it seek to establish intercourse between the living and the dead? If so, what benefit comes to either? Does Spiritualism benefit the living? Does it bring us fresh hope and courage through what it reveals of the life beyond? To that question I will confidently answer "No." If we believed in the messages that purport to come from dead friends in the spirit world, we should be bound to conclude that their interests were still centred in the life that they had left behind—that the life beyond lay in a blank world of mist and shadows. But does it benefit the dead? Is it best for them that we should selfishly seek to call them back to the world that they have left behind; that we should encourage them to stand at the gateway instead

of going forward to explore the many mansions of the Father's house? Of course, if you regard the whole thing as trickery and delusion this argument will not appeal to you. But to me, who do not so regard it, it is cogent. I do believe that we may hinder the progress of our dead in that other life by our selfish desire to recall them.

But if Spiritualism has no real gospel to bring us, its existence bears witness to the deep desire of the human heart to penetrate the mysterious barrier that severs the living from the dead. What has Christianity to say about all this? No one can study the Bible without noticing how strangely little it has to tell us about the conditions of life of that other world. We know that it is a life of rest—of preparation for a further stage of progress when the soul resumes its activity in a body suited to the needs of the life of eternity as this body that we leave behind at death is suited to the needs of the life of time. We know that it is a life of realization, of judgment, of understanding.

> "There the tears of earth are dried;
> There its secret things are clear;
> There the work of life is tried
> By a juster judge than here."

But if we try to focus the picture, it evades us. Lazarus returns from the dead, but he tells noth-

ing of the conditions of the life from which he had been recalled. Even our Lord's brief life in Paradise is shrouded in darkness. There remains only the confession of our Creed, "He descended into hell"—into the hidden place, the Sheol of Hebrew religion.

Why this reserve? Is it because the conditions of life are such as our present faculties are not capable of realizing? Or because fuller knowledge of that life would unfit us for the actual human life that we live? "Were the happiness of the next world," says Sir Thomas Browne, "as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live." Perhaps this is true, but consider the practical result on our lives of this uncertainty as to the conditions of the life beyond death.

I. It educates our faculty of trust. All life is an education in trusting God. For every day brings its own uncertainty; every morning we go out into the unknown, and every night in this city of ours many thousands of tired heads are laid down to sleep while "He Who watches over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." So at last, when "the long day's task is done," we do again what all life has taught us we may do without fear, as we say "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Why do I hope

for rest and progress, for fuller knowledge and clearer vision in the life beyond? Not from anything that has been revealed to me of that life, but from confidence in the purpose of God.

> "I know not where His islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond His love and care."

Twice in the history of the Church attempts have been made to picture the condition of the dead. The purgatorial teaching of the Roman Church is a warning against the effort to apply to that life the conditions of this, and scarcely less a warning is the conception that belongs to some schools of modern Protestantism of a monotonous life of enjoyment and inactivity. No. It is better that our hopes for the future should rest on our confidence in the love of God than on fugitive glimpses of the life beyond death. I do not want to call back the dead, that I have known to rap tables, or write half-incoherent messages at séances; but I do want to remind myself, as I think of them, that "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God." But what of the unrighteous—those who have blundered through life with no realization of its meaning, who have been the slaves of appetite or indolence? These,

too, we may dare to leave in our Father's hands. Perhaps they never can be now what they might have been, for there is an eternal loss (*damnum eternum*) that follows on unrepented sin. By what strange path God will lead home His erring children to the Father's house we do not know. Only we know that in that life things will not be as they are here. "There are last that shall be first, and first last." "In My Father's house are many resting-places; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

II. And then, secondly, it educates our faculty of love. Few things have been a greater loss in modern religion than the practical abandonment of the definite remembrance of our dead before God. We visit, for a time, the places where we have laid their worn out bodies to rest, but do we not need the reminder of the angel at the tomb on the first Easter morning: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here." Not here; but in that unseen world, along the very borders of which we move every day; knowing, perhaps, far more of us than we know of them; helping, perhaps in ways of which we have no conception, those who are still soldiers

in the "Church militant here in earth." For it is inconceivable that love can perish with the destruction of the body, and leave the life beyond impoverished of its highest and noblest attribute.

But how can we pray for our dead? If they are safe in the keeping of God, can our remembrance avail anything? Surely the answer is that we do not need to ask specific things for them. That we cannot do, for we do not know enough of the conditions of their life. But how can I cease to pray for those I care for when it is the only bond of union that remains to link us together? I do not ask for them remission of the pains of Purgatory. I do not ask for material blessings that have no meaning in the life to which they have gone. But I can pray that in whatever way my intercessions may bring to them deeper knowledge or fuller peace they may be accepted of God. And of that right no man shall rob me.

Years ago a clergyman told me that he had been converted to a belief in the duty of remembering our dead before God by a mother who came to him in perplexity because her children objected to leaving out of their childish prayers the name of a little brother who had died. So it is still true that He hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto

babes. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." What a new meaning the words gain when we remember that the heart's true treasure is love. As we grow old, earth grows poorer as those we love pass before us to the life beyond; but if there are fewer on earth for whom we pray, our list of friends in Paradise grows larger—and there is our true riches.

"How can I cease to pray for thee? Somewhere
In God's great universe thou art to-day;
Can He not reach thee with His tender care?
Can He not hear me when for thee I pray?

"Somewhere thou livest, and hast need of Him,
Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb;
And somewhere still there may be valleys dim,
That thou must pass to reach the hills sublime.

"Then all the more, because thou canst not hear
Poor human words of blessing, will I pray,
O true, brave heart! God bless thee, wheresoe'er
In God's great universe thou art to-day."

III. Then, lastly, it educates the faculty of hope. And hope is the parent of effort and patience. For if infinite love lives at the heart of the universe, what strange surprises may lie beyond death. Here on earth we are like children still at school, learning lessons the meaning of which we only half understand. Life would be very difficult sometimes if we did not believe that, in the beautiful words of Newman's epitaph,

we pass "out of shadows and illusions into the truth." But if there could come only one authentic voice from the other side to tell us that those we have known here are living there, would not our hope be stronger? An authentic voice! But how could we ever know that some evil intelligence was not mocking us with false hopes? Only one voice that we can trust has told us of what lies beyond, "If it were not so, I would have told you." So, as the years go on, the glow before us grows brighter, the wheels of time move faster, the river banks recede as we draw nearer to the sea, till, to the pure in heart, death is—

"Only a step into the open air,
Out of a tent already luminous
With light that shines through its transparent walls."

When on some Alpine slope or among the woods in the spring, or watching the miracle of the sunset over the sea, I am overwhelmed with those "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" of which Wordsworth speaks, or when music stirs feelings that lie vague and dim in the inner recesses of our life, then let us look up in hope. The soul is calling to its home; asking for the fulness of joy towards which it is travelling.

No, we do not want to assure ourselves of the

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reality of the other life by disturbing the rest of our dead, and recalling them to the trivial things of earth that they have left behind. But we remember them in every Eucharist as we say, "We bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear, beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples that, with them, we may be partakers of Thine everlasting kingdom."

IV

CHRISTMAS SERMONS

I. The Spirit of Expectation[1]

"This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us."—Isa. xxv. 9.

THE special note of the season of Advent is *expectation*. We are trained in the habit of looking forward that we may come to Christmas-time with the spirit of expectation in our hearts. For this spirit of expectation is like a golden thread, linking together the children of God of all times. It was the master-instinct of the prophets. They moved through the world of their day with something of the far-off look of men who have trained themselves to look forward. And gradually their vision came to concentrate on one thing—the promise of the coming of Christ. "We have waited for Him." The Old Testament is the record of how men waited for the Incarna-

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1907.

tion, how they kept alive the spirit of expectation in the midst of discouragement and long delay. And so when the promise was fulfilled, it was to men who had learned to wait that the truth was revealed, to shepherds who kept watch by night, to wise men who waited for His star, to Simeon and Anna who were looking for the consolation of Israel. But still the spirit of expectation lived on. Ask the early Christians what they are doing, and the reply is still the same: "We are waiting for Him." And still the unconquerable spirit of expectation lives in human hearts. Still men wait and dream of a good to come. Outrage rages almost unchecked in that Macedonia whose hopes of freedom Great Britain crushed deliberately thirty years ago; the natives are hounded to death in the forests of the Congo in the name of European civilization. At home childhood goes hungry, and old age is made dishonourable, while we spend on preparations for war the resources that might bring new hope to a million lives. How could we bear these things at all if it were not for the expectation of a new coming of Christ. We are waiting for Him.

Waiting for *Him*. It is not enough to look forward; we must know for what we are waiting. Little boy, you are waiting. For what? Is it for the time when you will be grown up and inde-

pendent, when schooldays are over and the big, wonderful world beyond opens? Young man, for what are you waiting? For success, and love, and honour? And then? For wealth, perhaps, and fame? And then? Is it only death at the end? Or is the true answer the answer of our text—we are waiting for God, for the touch of the Divine hand, the light of the Divine face, the realization of the vision of God? Keep this spirit of expectation, and you keep the secret of courage and hope; lose it and life is like a coloured window behind which the sunset has faded, leaving only the darkened framework of the picture that glowed with splendid colours a little while ago.

Christmas is a season of expectation. And then also it is a season of confidence. "He will save us." How the idea of salvation runs through all the Christmas story. "Unto you is born a *Saviour*." "Mine eyes have seen Thy *salvation*." "He will save us"—that is what Christmas comes to tell us again. Not—He will save the heathen, the outcast, the hopeless; but He will save *us*. It is a personal confession. For it implies that we are dissatisfied with our lives as they are; that we are willing that they should be lifted out of the bondage of convention, the slavery of selfishness and greed, the deception thoughtlessly

practised, the slander carelessly spoken. We confess that we too have need of salvation. And we confess that the power of the incarnate Christ is adequate to our needs.

No one can mix much with his fellow-men without realizing that a new doubt is everywhere awaking in men's minds. Is not Christianity an exhausted force? Is not its power over the world coming to an end? Here are vast social evils crying to heaven, and no salvation comes. Men live and work and die with no apparent consciousness of spiritual realities, and all our efforts break against the passive force of apathy.

Can we, in face of all this, still hold to our belief that He who was born on that first Christmas morning is the Saviour of the world? If He is a Saviour, where is His salvation? If He is a King, where is that kingdom for whose coming we have prayed again this morning? We must face questions like these, and they will lead us back to the cradle of Bethlehem. Like the wise men, we grow bewildered in the streets of the city and we lose our star, but as we go towards Bethlehem, behold, it goes before us again. We have found the lost clue, we are strong again, we can face the world's challenge. We believe that in the Incarnation lies still the hope of the world. Yes, and our hope, too. For when the

simple truths of religion have become complicated by human glosses, and have lost touch with reality, or have grown hard and intolerant, we need to bring them again to Bethlehem and lay them at the cradle of a little Child. For He is the Saviour of Christianity as well as the Saviour of the world. Of our religious ideas, as well as of our personal character, it is true that except we be converted and become as little children, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"He will save us," lifting us above vain broodings and impotent regrets, above the tyranny of social habits; till we breathe a freer air, and look out on a wider landscape, and enter into a larger brotherhood.

And lastly, Christmas is a season of realization. "This is our God." The Jewish records told how the people had stood at the foot of a great mountain and seen its summit shaken with earthquake and encircled with flame; and as they watched they whispered: "This—splendid, terrifying, isolated—this is our God."

And they had seen the luminous cloud that floated above the holiest place, and they had said: "This—among us, yet apart, mysterious, incomprehensible—this is our God."

But the hour came when awed faces of simple men looked down on the cradle of a little

Child, and whispered: "This is our God"; no longer separated, encircled with majesty, but veiled in flesh, humbled to the fashion of men, entering human life through the avenue of birth. Is it strange that from that moment a revolution began in human thought of which no man can see the end?

The realization of God; God, not far away in some heaven of music and rapture, but here, by the cradles of little children, in the paths where footsore men tramp wearily, in houses of gladness or sorrow. God here, and we do not know Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Do you think that was true only of that first coming, or is it still true to-day?

And now another Christmas comes to tell us how the lost romance of the world came back when Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the King. For a creed that tells how God was found in a cradle and on a cross ought surely to train us in the habit of watching for God where we should least expect to find Him. "This is our God"; we have marked His footsteps along the fields, we have heard His voice among the trees. But, most of all, we have learned to look for Him in the broken bread and the poured-out wine. For still the

wonder of that first Christmas Day renews itself in simple hearts—

> " For they who do their hearts no wrong,
> Who keep at eve the faith of morn,
> Shall ever hear the angels' song :
> ' To-day the Prince of Peace is born.' "

" The Prince of Peace." To-day we are asked to speak to the people of this country on the subject of international peace. But what can we say? There can be no true peace till the spirit of distrust and greed and selfish ambition ceases to dominate the policy of nations. For the moment there is hope, yet who can tell how soon a sudden passion, fanned by unscrupulous organs of the Press, may endanger the kindlier feeling that is at present abroad among the nations? The only real guarantee for peace is in the resolute and watchful action of all Christian men. In this, too, " He will save us," if we wait for Him. For He will save us from the impulse that makes for war, He will give us strength to stand firm when the passions of men break loose in the clamour for blood ; He will teach us that there are better battles to fight than the battles full of " confused noise and garments rolled in blood." *His* battle is against ignorance and vice, against the selfish heart and the grasping hand, against discord and hatred, and all the foul things that

haunt the darkness. Oh, soldiers of the Prince of Peace, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of this world's darkness. So we pray: "Give peace in our time, O Lord," not that we may rest in indolent ease, but that we may turn to the true task of the patriot—the battle against vice and drink and sweating and ignorance; the truceless battle that must not end till we can join the triumph song: "This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He *has saved us.*"

II. "THERE WAS NO ROOM"[1]

"Because there was no room."—ST. LUKE ii. 7.

CHRISTIAN devotion loves to dwell on every circumstance of the great event that we remember at this season—to recall the lowly surroundings of the first Christmas Day, when the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us. Nothing is insignificant in the story. The little city of Bethlehem, crowded with people, leaving only the rough shelter of an outhouse for travellers arriving late; the open country outside, where simple peasants kept watch; the light, the voice, the carol—how well we know it all! And in the

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1909.

story we catch this note of tragedy—here at the very beginning of it all—" There was no room." Children have been born in besieged cities while hostile crowds thundered at the gates, but no shout of warriors broke the silence of that first Christmas night. Children have been born in lonely places where wild beasts watched with hungry eyes ; but only tired animals lay round the manger that was the cradle of the Son of God. There was no hostility—but there was no welcome. It all happened long ago, and the event that seemed so unimportant then has seemed ever since the greatest event in all the world. Yet still as we look on through all the Christmas Days the note of tragedy persists—still the city is crowded and indifferent, still the few are watching in the dark, still it is in the outhouses of the world that the Christ is born.

It is not open hostility from which religion has most to fear in modern life. There are, as there always have been, men who are openly hostile to Christ, but they are noisy rather than numerous. The real danger lies much more in the fact that there is no room—that life is too crowded to leave any space for the claims of religion. Religion lies outside the main current of modern life. We talk of the brotherhood of man, and squander millions in arming ourselves for defence

against nations professing to be pledged to allegiance to Christ. We proclaim programmes of social reform, while definite religious teaching is in danger of being crowded out of our national educational system. We resent the dulness of our English Sunday, and reduce our public worship to a minimum. We tolerate the Gospel of the Incarnation so long as its claims do not interfere with our business or amusements.

This week from thousands of altars our Church is calling her children to come apart and rest awhile—to realize anew the miracle of that first Christmas Day, as the Incarnation renews its power in hearts ready to welcome the Christ. Yet how many have only the outhouse of their lives to spare ! We must shelter Him in a manger, for all the honourable places are needed for the claims of business or society or recreation. And, therefore, for us the glory of the Lord shines only as a light from far away ; the good tidings of great joy seem a tale of little meaning. I am sure that this process of crowding religion into the outhouses of life is going on to a degree that we only inadequately realize. Take, for example, the habit of family prayer. Whatever the cynic may say of it, it does represent the daily recognition of the claims of religion to a place in the life of the household. Yet how rapidly the habit is

disappearing under the conditions of modern life! "There is no room." Consider, again, how the reaction against the old Sabbatarianism is giving us a Sunday out of which rest and worship are both being driven by the claims of recreation and amusement.

It is a constant complaint against our own age that it produces no great men. Surely one reason for this is that real greatness needs a more spacious and less crowded life than we condemn ourselves to live. We demand of our statesmen a perpetual round of talk and controversy; we hamper our social reformers with Committees and Sub-Committees; we submerge our clergy in a sea of trivial and fussy activities. Is it any wonder if deep thought and clear guidance are denied us? Yet if the story of that first Christmas Day has any meaning, it means that an avenue has been provided by which the Divine and the Infinite can blend with the common life of men. It is a call to men to make room for God. "My little children, for whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you." There lies our supreme need. Our politics lack idealism, our Churchmanship lacks inspiration, till Christ be formed in them.

But now let us think of the words in a different connection. Let us remember how some reflection of the glory of Bethlehem shines over every

place where a child is born. Oh, world that had no welcome for Christ, what welcome have you given to the least of these His brethren? In the last twenty-four hours nearly three thousand children have been born in these islands. How many of them have been born in meaner and more squalid places than the outhouse that sheltered the infancy of the Son of God; and for the same reason—"because there is no room"? Yet it is the first elementary duty of national life to find room for the children. Every nation is judged at the bar of history by its care for its cradles and its graves—its graves, because in them lies the record of its past; its cradles, because in them lies the hope of its future. And a nation that can provide nothing but a manger to cradle its children will provide nothing but a cross to reward its manhood.

You may say, and say truly, that things are better than they were—that the worst evils of overcrowding have been dealt with. But how much more might have been done if the conscience of the Christian Church had been more awake to the need! And how much more might be done now if, instead of pacifying the slums of our cities with doles of food and firing—crumbs from the rich man's table that bring little blessing either to those who give or those who take—we insisted

on the elementary moral truth that a certain minimum of air and sunshine, of love and hope, is the right of every infant born in a land that professes to reverence the Babe of Bethlehem. "Because there was no room"—it is the one refrain that haunts the lives of the men at the bottom of our social system—no room for their work in the overcrowded labour market; no room for their children in the overcrowded slum area; no room for thought or prayer in the fierce struggle for the bare right to live.

Why do I remind you of these things to-day? Because these stunted human lives, in which the Gospel of the Incarnation cannot realize its promise of good, are a perpetual challenge to the Christian Society. Social progress can only be steady and effective when it has behind it the constant pressure of definite moral conviction. If the Incarnation cannot supply this nothing else can. Parliaments may legislate, but moral inertia and the strength of vested interests are too powerful for them. Men's minds may be stirred by a temporary emotion of benevolence, but it is soon forgotten. It is only the Gospel of the Incarnation that vindicates for every infant its right to a welcome and a home.

No nation that understood the meaning of the Incarnation could tolerate, as we do, a condition

of industrial life that obliges women to work in factories when their strength is needed for another and more sacred task, or leaves to casual benevolence the task of ministering to mother and child in the hour of need. We take thousands of men out of industrial life and become collectively responsible for their maintenance, that they may learn how to defend the nation in time of need; ought we not to be equally ready, where circumstances so require, to become collectively responsible for the maintenance of those to whom God has given the sacred task of motherhood? And would not the reward of a lowered rate of infant mortality, fewer dwarfed and stunted children in our schools, fewer homes where infants are cradled in squalor—would not these be a more than adequate recompense for the cost? And if beyond these things we could hear His Voice saying to us, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me," we should be rewarded an hundredfold.

I have spoken of overcrowding in two aspects—the overcrowding of lives that leaves no room for the Christ Who is God's gift, and the overcrowding of cities that leaves no room for the children, who are also God's gift. May I say a few words on one other line of thought suggested by the words? Has not our theology often become overcrowded

till the story of the Incarnation is pushed on one side? And does not Christmas recall us to a simpler and stronger creed? How many men, as they join in the Athanasian Creed, feel that they are losing the Christ of the Gospels in the mazes of philosophy? Then suddenly, like voyagers over an unknown sea, we catch sight of a beacon-light that we know. "That he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ." We have left the high abtractions of metaphysical speculation; we are back in the familiar streets; we hear the old message—"Unto you is born a Saviour"; we have found the Christ again where the shepherds found Him, "wrapt in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger."

The theology of every age tends gradually to grow complex, metaphysical, out of touch with the simple realities of life. Then it becomes no longer a bond of union, but a barrier of separation; the Catholic note dies out of it; the guest-house is full of strife, because there is no room where a little child may be set in the midst. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem":—

> "Come back with me to the first of all,
> Let us lean and love it over again—
> Let us now forget and now recall,
> Break the rosary in a pearly rain,
> And gather what we let fall!"

Simple men, tired of long watching in the dark; wise men, weary of endless speculations; sinful men, asking for salvation; heavy-laden men, asking for rest—let us come back to Bethlehem, praying as we go for the child-like eyes to see, the child-like heart to understand.

The story of the Incarnation is simple as all great mysteries are simple—hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. As the theology of the future realizes anew the significance of the Incarnation it will be simpler and greater than the theology of to-day. It will clear its guest-house of other guests to make room for the Son of God. It will have a truer sense of proportion, a stronger consciousness of the mystery of common things. It will guard its holy things less against philosophical doubt, more against moral evil. It will probably define less; it will probably worship more.

The air outside is full of the angry war-cries of party strife—fierce demands that no room shall be found in our national educational system for what is called "sectarian teaching." Oh, angry voices, be silent a moment; and in the silence we may catch some far-off note of the carol that tells of peace on earth. How we shall feel ashamed of all the clamour as we kneel by the cradle of the Babe of Bethlehem! Keep us out

of your schools if you will, but leave room for Christ to come in. For if there is no welcome for Him in the Bethlehem of our schools, there will be a Calvary outside. Aye, and beyond the Calvary a house left desolate, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Religion crowded out of its true place in the life of the individual; childhood crowded out of its rightful share in our national life; the Incarnation crowded out of its paramount place in our theology—and the challenge of Christmas coming back to us again! "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not." That will be true of thousands of so-called Christian homes this week. God grant that it may not be true of yours or mine.

III. International Peace[1]

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and He came to the ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion

[1] Preached in Westminster Abbey on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1912.

is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—DAN. vii. 13, 14 (R.V.).

JEWISH Apocalyptic literature arose when the little nation had been swept into the orbit of the great world-Powers. It was the first attempt of the Hebrew mind to formulate a philosophy of history. It conceived of the history of the world as a colossal struggle between brute force and moral power—a struggle in which the human must first endure, and then conquer, the brute-world, whose only weapon was force, and whose only purpose was to destroy. So the great kingdoms of the ancient world are pictured as savage wild beasts, reeking with carnage, trampling each other in a fierce orgy of strife. It is from such a picture as this that the author of the Book of Daniel turns, in the words of our text, to describe the rise of the new kingdom, the kingdom of the human, the universal empire of a Son of Man.

What shall we say of this philosophy of history —this assertion that all true progress in international relations is marked by the appeal from the law of the brute to the law of the man, that the only kingdom that can last is the kingdom founded on the great human instincts of service and fellowship? Beyond all doubt it is the philosophy of history that is implied in all the

life and teaching of Jesus Christ. For His appeal was always to the human in every man. His kingdom is a kingdom of human beings living a human life. He came to save the world by calling out the human that lay submerged under all the instincts and appetites of the beast; by giving men the power to be men. In the Book of Revelation, where the Christian ideal is interpreted in the language of Jewish Apocalyptic, the history of the Church is presented still as a tremendous struggle of the human against the beast, the child against the dragon. And still it is the Son of Man Who leads on the great campaign.

Is the struggle over yet? Sometimes it seems almost as though it had hardly begun. For the symbol of the wild beast still seems the best symbol for the great nations of the modern world. The British lion, the Russian bear, the German eagle, the Chinese dragon—we are familiar with them all. But what do they imply? Do they not imply that the appeal is still to brute force, that rapacity and carnage still rule the relations of nation to nation? Where is the Kingdom of the Son of Man? It is an appalling thing to realize how thin is the crust that civilization has spread over the volcanic fires of primitive savagery in modern life, how little it needs to change the voices of men into the wild howls of beasts of

prey. Man holds his kingdom by a precarious tenure. It is because these things are so that there lies on us, who call ourselves Christians, so tremendous a responsibility. For our appeal can never be to the beast, but always to the man. That is what evolution means—the subjugation of the brute in us to the purposes of the spirit :—

"If my body came from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No; but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,
Hold the sceptre, human soul, and rule thy province of the brute."

We know that this is true of our own lives, that the first Christmas Day began the fulfilment of the prophet's dream of the brute world ruled by the hand of a little child. But are we sufficiently alive to the truth that the same law holds good for the life of the world?

I do not want to draw too lurid a picture. I know that war is no longer the normal relation of civilized nations, that no statesman thinks of war as anything but a last desperate alternative. Yet how little is needed to turn Europe into an armed camp. Not many months have passed since the question of the control of a bankrupt

province of North Africa nearly plunged three great nations into a fratricidal contest of which no man could see the end. And during the last few weeks the hideous shadow of a possible contest, waged for no adequate reason, has been hanging dark and menacing over Europe. Yet the peoples of Europe do not want wars. Organized labour has protested in every European capital against the folly and the wrong of the reversion to the law of the brute. But in times of crisis the shrill outcries of the ignobler organs of the Press do their best to rouse the beast that lies dormant in us all. At such times we listen for the united voice of the Christian conscience—we listen, but, alas ! we listen in vain. Yet after all, it is not when the swords are out that the voice of the Church can avail most. "*Inter arma silent leges.*" For wars do not come through a sudden impulse unless the poison of distrust and greed and envy has been already at work. Leave the passions of the beast to grow, and the ultimate appeal to the law of the beast is bound to follow. No ; if you want to stop war you must stop the degraded ideals that make for war. There are times when war seems the only remedy for conditions worse than war ; but such conditions can only arise where the nations have preferred selfish ends to the call of moral duty.

There has not been a single war in the last hundred years that might not have been averted if an appeal had been made early enough from the law of the beast to the law of the man.

We cannot undo the past? No, but at least we can learn the lessons that it has to teach. We may recognize that the last century has been full of wars and rumours of wars because it has been an age of false ideals. It has estimated national greatness by the wrong standard—by the standard of the beast, not by the standard of Christ. It has set the blasphemous Gospel of blood and iron above the Gospel of the Manger and the Cross. It has degraded the noblest things in the world—patriotism, sacrifice, endurance, courage—in the service of the basest things in the world—lust of power, greed of land or gold, hatred, and envy and spite. It has built up a vast system of vested interests that depend for their prosperity on the maintenance of the war-spirit. What is the true standard of national greatness? Is it to be measured in terms of the fear and envy of other nations? Is it to be estimated in terms of Dreadnoughts or conscript armies? To ask such questions plainly is to answer them. A hundred Dreadnoughts cannot make a nation great if its children are ignorant or hungry, its men drunken or self-indulgent; if impurity haunts its streets

and economic selfishness rules its industry. What avails it that Britannia rules the waves if she cannot rule her own children? The only true greatness of a nation is moral greatness. The only kingdom that God recognizes or bestows is the Kingdom of the Son of Man. And it is the only Kingdom that will last. The rule of violence ends in violence. "They that take the sword perish with the sword." Every nation, like every individual, must meet the inexorable challenge, "What is thy moral value to the world?" For the permanent forces of the world are moral forces. They may be cradled in a manger because there is no room, they may be tortured on the Cross, they may be laid in the tomb with seal and watch to guard; but before daybreak they are alive again, more fully alive for all that they have endured. In our saner moments we know that this is true. Yet how often Christian men speak and think of international peace as an impracticable dream, an illusion cherished by a few worthy but foolish people who have not looked the facts in the face! I doubt if there is any other department of human affairs in which the habitual language of Churchmen is so glaringly out of touch with the principles of our religion as in this matter of war. Beyond all doubt, the world has moved forward a long way in the last

hundred years towards a nobler conception of international relations; but when I ask myself whether this advance has been the outcome of the strenuous protest of the Christian Church, I do not feel certain that I can assert any such claim.

But we are told that an age of universal peace will be an age of selfish indulgence and ignoble ideals—that many of the highest instincts of our nature can only be evoked by the challenge of battle. It is all true, but the Kingdom of the Son of Man is not a kingdom of ignoble peace. "I saw heaven opened; and behold a white horse and He that sat thereon, called faithful and true; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure." The final argument against war among nations is that it is the degradation of instincts planted in our nature for spiritual purposes. The passion for destruction, which is the foundation of the war-spirit, is the echo in human life of the Divine hatred of sin. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but the war is not the less real because it is waged against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. As a nation we declared war a few days ago on the hideous trade in women's souls that has been tolerated too long. That is a war in which every

true man may thank God for the opportunity of fighting. Go into one of our great London hospitals, and you will see the organized forces of human kindness and skill fighting their ceaseless war against disease. And some of us are dreaming dreams of the conversion of our present clumsy and ineffective Poor-law system into a great organized effort of the forces of the nation to abolish—not the noble poverty that uplifts, but the bitter and cruel poverty that degrades. Never was there a clearer call than now to him who has no sword to sell his cloak and buy one. The moral forces of our national life are strong enough, if intelligently organized, to transform this England of ours. But it will not be an easy task. It will demand all the patriotic love, all the power of endurance and sacrifice of which human lives are capable. All true progress is by the way of the Cross. To all sons of men sounds the call of the Son of Man Who came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

What shall we do then? Shall we leave our frontiers unguarded, our young men untrained? Shall we live as though the Christian ideal were already supreme in a world that has hardly yet begun to understand it? No; but we can keep the Christian ideal before us as the master light of all our seeing. We can check the foolish word

that ministers to international distrust; we can try to understand the point of view of nations whose national characteristics differ from ours; we can bring the intrigues of diplomacy into the daylight. And most of all, we can realize anew the significance of the Incarnation. "*Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum.*" In the womb of the Virgin He took upon Him humanity that He might set it free—free to be its true self. For just in proportion as we surrender ourselves to the control of the brute instincts in us, in just that proportion we abrogate our freedom. The gospel of blood and iron is a gospel of slavery. And I think the gospel of impulse, which claims M. Bergson as its philosophical high-priest, and Syndicalism (which means the application of the law of the brute to industrial life) as its most notable practical outcome, is not less a gospel of slavery. For it is only in the world that is still far above us that—

> "Law, life, joy, impulse are one thing."

If He Whom we call the Holy Spirit is the Divine impulse immanent in all life, He Whose Birth we celebrate this week is the Divine Reason immanent in humanity. To appeal from reason to impulse, in a world which is moving forward, work-

ing out the beast, is to appeal from the higher to the lower. The freedom of self-discipline is the only freedom that will enable humanity to fulfil its appointed task of transforming the lion and the eagle, "red in tooth and claw," into the living creatures, like a lion and a flying eagle, round about the throne of the Son of Man in the Apocalyptic vision of the seer of Patmos.

The Incarnation means that God sets aside the weapon of force in dealing with men, that His appeal is to the rational faculties of our nature. And the whole earthly life of the Son of Man was one long protest against the appeal to force as the ultimate arbiter in human affairs. The time has not yet come when even Christian nations can beat their swords into ploughshares and study war no more. But if it is ever to come it will only be through the constant protest of the Christian conscience against the clumsy and savage method of war. There is ample scope for endurance and courage, for comradeship and self-sacrifice, in the agelong struggle by which the Kingdom of the Son of Man rolls back the broken forces of sin. Centuries ago the Church struck through the chaos of Western Europe with her proclamation of the Truce of God. Is there no Truce of God that the Church can proclaim to-day among the nations, no Christ to stand, as He

stood long ago, above the heaving waters that threaten to overwhelm the hopes of the civilized world, and calm the fretful passions of men with His challenge, " Peace, be still " ?

V

THE DIVINE INTERPRETER[1]

"Every man heard them speak in his own language."
—Acts xi. 6.

I DO not propose to enter into the difficult critical questions raised by this account of the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost. I want rather to ask you to take hold of the essential truth that lies under it—the truth that when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church, men heard the message of God in a language that they could understand. One of the central thoughts that run through all St. Luke's story of the foundation of Christianity is the idea of restoration. A healer himself, he loves to tell how God the great Healer set about the work of lifting the world into health. So the gift of the Holy Spirit is, in his view, a restoration—a bringing back of the lost harmony of social life. Man begins to speak to man again over all the

[1] Preached before the University of Cambridge.

barriers of rank and race, religion comes out of its dim-lit sanctuaries and walks abroad among men. That is how the new age comes in—with a new message and a new method.

Of the new message I do not propose to speak. It claims to be a permanent message—the story of a truth that no process of years can change. But it is of the new method that I desire to speak.

In all the history of religion you can trace two tendencies at work. On the one hand there is the tendency of religious thought to create a specialized atmosphere and language, till the symbol of religious truth is not the open door but the guarded shrine, not the open book but the book sealed with seven seals that no man can avail to unclasp.

I suppose it would be hard to find any better example of the working out of this tendency than the Jewish world of the time of our Lord. Here is religion with its carefully elaborated ceremonials and formulas, and here is life with its claims and needs. But the great gulf is fixed between them, and the simple devotion of the peasant or the publican dare not claim its place beside the official worship of the religious class. Into this world came the Great Teacher, and men with a surprise of sudden joy heard in their own language the wonderful works of God. Jesus

Christ reclaimed the gospel for the poor, and the implacable hostility of the official religious leaders of the nation repaid Him with the cross.

But it is not only among Scribes and Pharisees that the tendency is found. Christian history presents us at every turn with the same picture. The truths of one age become the phrases of the next. For life moves on, and living things change because they live. St. Francis adopts for his little brothers of the poor the rough coat of the peasant, to express their fellowship with the poorest and humblest—turn a page of history and the Franciscan habit is the sign of an order. Or again, to take an example nearer to ourselves, in the days when the tunic was the customary dress of the time the clergy go robed in the *tunica alba*. But the *tunica alba* becomes the alb, and then the surplice, till what was once the badge and sign of the identification of the priest with his people becomes the badge and sign of his separation from them.

This is one tendency of all religious history. And the other is the tendency to reformation—re-formation in the true sense—the bringing back of religion into touch with the real facts of life. It was in this sense that the Hebrew prophet was a great reformer. He stood in the market-place inspired with a Divine power of reality,

he swept away with rude strength the conventions of the age and brought men back to bare, naked truth. And men were startled into thought as they heard spoke in their language the wonderful works of God.

It is the will of God that the eternal truth shall be presented to men in a language that they can understand. That is one of the great central truths of the Incarnation—that truth must be eternal in its essence, local in its presentation. Before the mystery of the earthly life of the Incarnate Son of God human thought bows baffled. Yet He spoke with little children and they were not afraid, He talked by the roadside to simple men and they answered as man to man. No halo of glory awed the crowds that waited to greet Him by the lakeside. If men compared Him with the religious teachers of their own time what they felt was that He was more entirely one with themselves. And He was Very God.

That is the religion of the Incarnation—the eternal truth walking abroad among men, laying hold on conscience and heart not by the splendour of outward show, but by the convincing appeal of its secret beauty. Try if you can to probe the depth of significance of those words that startled the congregation gathered in the synagogue of

Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."

A man can be called to no nobler task than the task of translating the eternal gospel into the language of the people. We say sometimes that our age is rejecting the gospel. But is there any honest man who is not sometimes haunted by the doubt whether our age has yet heard the gospel in its own language? The restatement of truth is not a process that needs now and then, at rare intervals, to be undertaken with fear and trembling, but is rather the great central task for which the Church of Christ as a teaching body, and therefore a learning body, exists. A Church that dare not restate truth has forfeited her right to be the trustee of the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints—once-for-all delivered that it might be permanently available for earth's changing needs, not to be wrapt together in a napkin, to be delivered at last into the hand that gave it, clean, untarnished, safe; but to be risked and spent, to gain fresh truths to itself, to pass from hand to hand in the great market-places of the world—current coin that men can use and handle. "Lo, thy pound hath gained ten pounds," it is worn by the hands that have held it, it is scratched and dented by long ages of busy

life, and now we bring it back—the gold of eternity coined in the currency of time.

There is no task laid upon the theological leaders of a great University comparable in importance with this of translating, and teaching us how to translate, the gospel of eternity into the language of time.

Will you bear with me if I venture to express the regret that must, I think, be widely felt that our own University has not made more adequate provision for keeping its students in touch with modern thought on the side of Apologetics? Surely a University that insists on retaining *Paley's Evidences* as a subject for its entrance examination is under a special obligation to see that its students do not go out to meet the attacks of to-day in the worn-out armour of a hundred years ago, or make shipwreck of their faith because no one has told them on how strong a foundation the truth of the Gospel rests.

But, secondly, I ask you to notice that this power to speak in the language of the people is represented here as the direct outcome of the coming into men's lives of the Holy Spirit. For it is the coming into men's lives of the Holy Spirit that brings them into vital touch with reality. It is so all through the process that we call inspiration.

The heart of the prophet is wedded to the Holy Spirit of God, and behold he speaks in the market-place the language of men. The Holy Spirit descends in unique potency on one consecrated human life, and behold, the Divine has become a little child—a babe lying in a manger. A miracle? Yes, but a miracle of restoration—not the creation of one abnormal life but the restoration of one normal life in a world of disease, the beginning of one real thing in a world of illusion.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." Perhaps of all the articles of our Creed this is the one we realize least. We have made the mistake of trying to understand what it means to believe in the Holy Catholic Church before we have learnt to understand the earlier clause, and will any man deny that we have failed? If he do, let the divisions of Christendom be his answer.

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." It is one of the most baffling enigmas of Church history that just as the Church had laid deep and strong the foundations of her faith in her belief in the Incarnation—just as she would naturally have turned next to the fuller understanding of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the flood of barbarian invasion broke, and the organized fabric of social life in the West went down with a crash

that shook the world. Only in the East was there leisure or inclination for further doctrinal development, and in the disastrous schism between East and West the thought of the East grew sterilized through want of vitality, and the West was left to approach the great question from the standpoint of organization rather than from the standpoint of life.

But now at last, in the mercy of God, the opportunity that slipped from the Church of the sixth century is being given back to the Church of to-day. What the theologian has shrunk from attempting, the patient labours of our leaders of science has been slowly achieving; and now we are called to enter on a land that we have not won, to inhabit cities of thought that we have not built. The promised land—a few of the scouts that we have sent before us have brought back an evil report of the land, and we shrink from fearlessly going forward. Yet science has been giving just the witness that the Catholic Church needs to the truth of a living God, working in the world not from without but from within,

> "Compelling there
> All new successions to the forms they wear;
> Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
> To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
> And bursting in its beauty and its might
> From trees and beasts and men into the heaven's light."

Are there any young lives that have not been startled sometimes with the splendour of a sudden dream that this orphaned world might be full of God? What if after all it be true that in Him we live and move and have our being, that He comes not in rare visitation at high moments but pouring through every avenue of sentient life? Guard that dream, for it is the one road down which you will reach the ultimate reality of things. Guard that dream, for it will be your strength for service in the day when you must stand in the market-place and speak to men in a language that they can understand.

For this is one of the ways in which a real belief in the Holy Spirit will affect our way of speaking to men—it will lay upon us the incubus of realization. The man who dares to stand and speak to men of truths that are not vital in his own life will speak no language that they can understand. The Gospel of the Holy Ghost is the gospel of a realized God. And that is why the Church that believes in the Holy Ghost is a Church that can speak in the language of men.

Consider the case of any organism. Mark how, by the power of the life that is in it, it adapts itself to its changing conditions, how it throws out organs suited to its needs, under what infinite variations of outward form it preserves

its identity. And the student of the Acts of the Apostles will detect in the record of the first beginning of the Church the same sense of exuberant life, the same fearless challenge of the future. New organs grow up as they are needed, new forms and conceptions are shaped or left behind, the Church is flexible with the conquering flexibility of life.

It belongs to this ideal of realization that in the story as St. Luke tells it, it was in the praises of the Apostles, not in their preaching, that men first heard the note of a common humanity larger than rank or race. You can translate nothing into preaching that you have not first translated into praise. "The Catholic faith is this that we worship." For worship is realization quickened into adoration.

That is one half of the truth. And the other half is that belief in the Holy Ghost throws on us the incubus of history. For when a man says, "I believe in the Holy Ghost," he asserts his belief in the continuity of the Divine working in the world. "I will give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever." The idea that the Church should go back and take up the thread of Christian thought from the point where it dropped from the hands of the Apostles has attracted many minds, but it involves a

denial of all that belief in the Holy Ghost means in history. Allow what you will for the hindering influence of human superstition and sin, make what deductions you will for the inadequate response of the Church, still it remains true that the work of the Holy Spirit did not cease in the Church in the first century, or the sixth or the sixteenth. The incubus of history is upon us. It is only unswerving loyalty in interpreting the teaching of history that can ever enable us to speak in their own language to the men of to-day, whom history has made what they are.

So, therefore, the sanction of the Christian Gospel is twofold. There is the sanction of the human conscience, and there is the sanction of the historic faith. There is a deep significance in that phrase of St. Paul, "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience." For a true word of God will awaken a response out of the unrealized depths—those "abysmal depths of personality" that are the dwelling-place of the Divine.

Yet we may see around us what shipwreck is made of faith where the appeal is made exclusively to the conscience of the individual. And not less clearly we may see what shipwreck is made of faith when the only appeal is to history, when the antiquarian and the archæologist rule and the people's needs are forgotten. But the

historic faith and the faith of the human heart find their point of union in the one Spirit of which both alike are the imperfect witnesses.

"I believe in the Catholic Church." Grasp the great conception of a Church universal in the scope of its appeal because it can speak to every man in his own language, because it is built so deep on the heart of things that it can fearlessly reshape their outward form to meet life's changing needs, strong in self-forgetfulness, human as the Incarnate Son of God was human, sharing all human suffering in the intensity of its sympathy, bearing all human sin through its vital union with the atoning Lord; not trying to speak to all men in one language, but making all languages the vehicles of the one truth; not attempting to impose one type of ritual or even perhaps of organization on all men everywhere, but shaping the outward form of things by the power of an indwelling life; not seeking vainly on lonely mountains for the lost Master she has loved, but finding still the ever-renewed consecration of the descending mantle; asking not how much of the past she can recapture, but how much of the future she can claim.

We are far, far away still from the fulfilment of that dream, and still the people wait, growing impatient because through the stately ritual of

our services, and the uninspired orthodoxy of our sermons there sounds for them no brother's voice translating its offering of praise into a language they can understand.

Is there no remedy? Yes. May I dare to say that God has laid it as a special task on the men of this generation that they should realize afresh that great truth of which Pentecost was the first realization—the truth of the Living God as a vital, present fact. And as the new life stirs in the Church of Christ, waking her from the false Catholicism that narrows and divides to the true Catholicism that enlarges and unites, men will hear again, as they heard long ago, a voice that they can understand telling of the wonderful works of God. And like an electric thrill the gladness of a new realization will break into worship on human lips. And for this realization some of you are here to prepare yourselves. Like the disciples in the upper room, you are waiting for the Divine assurance that you shall not be left to go out among men orphaned and impotent. All that I have tried to say to you to-day is briefly comprehended in this one thing—Believe in the Holy Ghost—believe in the Holy Ghost not as a power that may come into the world some day, waking among men a hope and strength to which we are strangers; not as a power that

came into the world long ago and has slowly gone back like a retreating tide to the ocean whence it came. No, but as a power present now—a living presence. The progress of applied science in the last generation has not been the creation of new forces, but the discovery of new means of making existing forces better serve the needs of man.

We have learnt to control the forces of Nature by humble inquiry and wise obedience. We have realized Nature's possibilities. And the corresponding task in respect of the things of the Spirit waits for the Church of Christ as a call and challenge. Can we do for the spirit of man what a hundred eager discoverers have done for the body of man? The tide of the Spirit is low in the social life of the England of to-day, and we might well lose hope unless we believed that around the world's discord and confusion and sin, lay the enfolding atmosphere of the Holy Spirit of God, manifesting Himself through every human instrument in proportion as it is submitted to His purpose, turning stereotyped formulas into living truths, breaking through the restrictions of our imperfect conceptions, the Lord and Life giver.

The greatest lessons that University life—the greatest lessons that all life—can teach us, are the realizations of the reality of God and the

realization of the needs of men. Only as we learn these can we hope to take our part in the greatest task that Christ has given His Church to do—the translation of the everlasting gospel into the language of men.

VI

THE TESTIMONY OF EXPERIENCE [1]

"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the Twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."—St. John vi. 66–69.

EVERY student of the Gospel must have noticed on what easy terms our Lord received His earliest followers. He bound them by no oaths, He committed them to no creed. Only He cast on them the spell of His personal call, and one by one, in simple love, they arose and followed Him. And in those early days the whole programme of the Kingdom "stood out in sunny outline, bright and clear." The great mountains that seem so faint and far away to us, seemed, in the light of that early morning, so near and distinct. But soon there began a change. He began to speak to

[1] Preached in St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford.

them of deeper truths, hard to understand; of a cross heavy to bear. And then one by one they began to drop out of the ranks. They went back, and walked no more with Him. Yet through all the sad disillusionment of these desertions He never took the easy course of lowering the standard of discipleship. He was infinitely tender to the men who failed, but He would accept no lowered ideals. For His aim was not to gather a great crowd of half-hearted supporters, but to sift and test till He found the faithful few who might be entrusted with the stupendous task of taking the Gospel to the world. So He brought men to a twofold test. He called them to intellectual effort and to personal sacrifice. And many of them could not stand the test.

"Will ye also go away?" To every generation comes the same question. For every generation has its testing-time. Many of us have accepted our religious ideas as part of our early training. We have not thought deeply or suffered greatly—only He called us, and we followed almost without question. But this cannot always be so. We, too, must abide the test, and to many men University life is the period when they face the issue.

There is the intellectual test. If you look

at this chapter you will see that our Lord was opening up deep lines of thought that went down to the heart of things. And many of His hearers shrank from the effort to understand, took refuge in a thoughtless literalism, and went their way. When a man passes into the free atmosphere of University life one of two things is bound to happen : either he will see deeper into the truth of things, and reach, not without effort and travail of soul, a more assured conviction, or slowly but certainly truths that are not thought out will lose their hold over his life ; other claims and influences will claim him ; he will go away, and walk no more with Jesus Christ. For our greatest danger is not blank unbelief, but an attitude of mistaken tolerance that believes nothing strongly or with real conviction. We find that our literary and scientific ideas are inadequate and often incorrect. Have we any right to believe that our religious convictions rest on any surer foundation ? At all events, we see that faith can no longer be the unquestioning acceptance of doctrines presented to us as true. And sometimes, when we give ourselves time to think, we are appalled when we realize how far we have drifted from the anchorage-ground of earlier days.

Then, again, there is the practical test. We come to see that the call of Christ means more than we thought when first we began to follow. We find ourselves suddenly become inheritors of great possessions—possessions of intellectual opportunity, of freedom and friendship—and even as we reach out to grasp them comes the voice that we know, with its insistent demand, "Go and sell; go and give; go and share." Must I live a life of stern self-control in an atmosphere that seems to invite to the gratification of every taste and desire; is all the new wealth of freedom mine only that I may barter it for a cross? A University is the birthplace of great ideals; alas! is it not also sometimes their grave? Notice next how the disciples answered this appeal of the Lord's. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" What is the alternative? We cannot merely sink back to the old life, we cannot ignore all the past as though it had not been. Is not that still a valid question? Here still are the actual results of the life of Christ on the world, lives lifted up to a new level, hearts made softer and stronger; around His Name gather the best hopes of the world. When men ask us to go away and walk no more with Him, may we not ask the question still, "What is the alternative?" Some ideal there

must be to lift the lives of men, some champion there must be to lead the battle with sin, some gospel there must be for the weary and the heavy laden. Even if we admit all that the most advanced modern critic asks—even if we come to believe that we see the figure of the Prophet of Nazareth through mists of myth and legend and theological speculation (I do not admit that the view is valid)—it still remains true that that dimly-seen Figure stands for all the highest ideals and noblest possibilities of humanity; that without it human life would be impoverished to a degree difficult to exaggerate. If our life's one supreme duty is to serve the highest that we know, we are committed to the service of Christ.

My brothers, remember that, however little Jesus Christ seems to be to you, He is in reality more than you suspect. He is the secret source of impulses of good that you have never traced back to their origin. He is the motive-power of many an act of quiet self-sacrifice that you never thought of attributing to His influence. So the answer of the disciples closed by an appeal to the testimony of personal experience. "We have believed and know that Thou art the Christ." That, after all, is the ultimate appeal for all of us. A man examining the credentials of Christianity

with no realization of personal experience cannot hope to feel their cogency as we feel them if we know that our own best selves are witnesses for the truth of our creed. I know that at Holy Communion I have been lifted into communion with the Unseen ; I know that my life has been effective just in proportion as I have yielded it to Him ; I know that when I have forgotten Him I have failed. And no intellectual doubt can invalidate this testimony of experience. To this appeal to experience Christianity is irrevocably committed. So when John the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus to ask " Art thou He that should come ? " our Lord's reply was an appeal from speculation to experience—from the dream to the deed.

Are we prepared to abide by the same test ? Can we meet the scepticism of the age with the same confident appeal to facts ? Do the blind receive sight, are the sick healed, are the poor made glad with good news ? It is just these questions that perhaps University life has in the past too often forgotten. I am sometimes tempted to think that we want a complete change in the character of our examinations for candidates for Holy Orders—that, instead of asking them " How would you refute the Apollinarian heresy ? " we ought to

ask them " How would you convince a drunkard in a slum parish that Christ is his Saviour from sin ? "

But remember that what is being brought to the test to-day is not Christ, but our interpretation of Him. He is still the Saviour of the world, and all that saves the world is His. If our interpretation of Christ is bringing sight to the blind and strength to the weak and cleansing to the impure and gladness to the poor, then it stands vindicated as a true interpretation. But if it is the bolstering of ancient wrongs, if it lives delicately in palaces, and condones selfishness and greed ; if it gathers into its churches exactly the class that did not flock to hear Christ, and leaves outside exactly the class that always crowded around the places where He came—then it is not Christ that has failed, but our interpretation of Him. I cannot acquiesce in the idea that the masses are outside our churches from mere perversity and innate wickedness ; I will not admit yet that the old promise, " I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," has lost its truth. No, it is we who have failed—we who have been content to follow where we ought to have led, to learn from others what we ought to have taught.

To the men who are avowedly outside the Christian society this test of practical efficiency is the only one that greatly appeals. Speak to them of Apostolic succession, of valid Sacraments, of the authority of General Councils—the answer of their minds, if not of their lips, is still, "Show us your blind that have received sight, your depraved that have been made clean, your poor who have been made glad; show us those greater works that Christ promised should be done by those who loved Him." Such a challenge, by whatever lips uttered, is a true challenge of God. To the disciple who cannot stand the test it is a call to desert the flag, to go away and walk no more with the Christian society; but to the disciple whose faith can stand the test it is a call to return to Christ for fresh guidance and inspiration. But, most of all, it is a call to humility, to the laying aside of arrogant pretensions to the exclusive proprietorship of truth. "Thou hast the words of eternal life"—Thou—not we. It is so fatally easy for us to go to the teaching of Christ to find the vindication of our own preconceived ideas—to find an excuse for neglecting the claims of social justice in His words, "Who made Me a judge or a divider among you?" or a justification for slum-life

in His words, "The poor ye have always with you." But the hard thing is to sit at the feet of Christ till we learn His Spirit and catch the secret of His power. But that is what we are called to do. Our own age is singularly responsive to strong conviction. Eloquence does not move the men of to-day as it moved our forefathers; but real conviction tells. Better preach a half-Gospel and believe it with all your heart than preach a whole Gospel with half-hearted conviction. But remember that conviction based on personal experience is the very opposite of the arrogant spirit. Experience testifies where arrogance denounces; experience, like love, suffers long and is kind.

University life offers a unique opportunity of putting our religion to the test of experience. If among the distractions of these busy days you will keep your concentration of purpose, if you will guard from neglect your quiet times of prayer and Bible-study, then, while all other sides of your nature are expanding, your religious life will expand with them; and when you have put your religion to the test in your own personal life, then you will go out from this place to put it to the test in the life of the world.

To many thoughtful men it has seemed that

the coming generation will see the gradual fading out of definite Christian conviction. We are told that already it has lost its place among intellectual forces, that the world of modern commerce and international diplomacy treat the Christian law as an impracticable dream. This is true, but it is not the whole truth; for, while the prosperous and successful are turning from the Christian ideal to the life of self-indulgence or contest, the ever-growing army of men who find—

> "The heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world"

too hard to bear are turning to the Christian ideal as the one hope of the world. We are lost unless Christ can save us. All the bitter sense of wrong that rankles in the hearts of men; all the new aspirations and hopes that are stirring in our national life; all the distress of nations with perplexity that are the birth-pangs of a new world—all these are a challenge to the Church of Christ. Shall we dare to take up the challenge? Do we believe enough in the conquering power of the Christian ideal to present it as the one adequate answer to the needs of our age?

"We have believed and know." Through all intellectual confusion, through all moral perplexity that one fact stands. There can be no turning back for the man who has given his life to the service of Christ.

VII

THE VICTORY OF FAITH[1]

"If ye have faith . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea; and it shall be done."—MATT. xxi. 21.

AMONG the pictures we use to illustrate the character of the Christian society, none is more familiar than that of an army going out to battle. So we sing—

> "Like a mighty army
> Moves the Church of God."

It is an inspiring picture, but can we say that it corresponds in the least to the facts? If we were to judge by the correspondence columns of our religious press we should be inclined to think of ourselves as a camp filled with sounds of internal strife. Perhaps it would be even truer to describe the Christian society as an army standing at ease, while a few of its officers are quarrelling with each other, and a

[1] Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral.

little band of skirmishers is advancing unsupported against the enemy.

Yet the presence of our brothers of the King's army, who are worshipping with us here to-day, serves to remind us that we are pledged manfully to fight under the banner of Christ against sin, the world and the devil. We are the "far-flung battle-line" of Christ. Yet where is the exultation that leaps to respond to the challenge of great moral issues? Where is the—

> "prompt, cheery thud
> Of glove on ground that answers ringingly
> The challenge of the false knight?"

Some of us younger men had learned to listen for one voice from this pulpit—a voice now called to speak in another place—that rang with this note of challenge, that had in it something of the grand confidence of the old Mosaic anthem "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered."

And sometimes it has seemed as though the thrill of a great moral purpose had begun to move through the host, as though the insolent defiance of some giant evil had stirred the Christian conscience. "Now," we have said, "the Church will speak with one voice; now we shall forget our paltry contests and sweep forward in one great

charge that shall turn to flight the armies of the aliens." But, as we have looked again, it was only a little group of warriors that we saw going out to battle, while all along the hillside the army stood at ease watching the unequal contest, Can we claim that our Church has led the war against intemperance, impurity, industrial selfishness, political corruption? Great churchmen have played their part, but have they felt behind them the backing and encouragement of the whole of that Christian society that claims to be specially in trust with the cause of national righteousness? To ask such questions is to answer them. The call that comes to us at this Lenten season is not only a call to personal repentance, but a call to corporate repentance. Wherever other Churches may stand, our place as a Church is at the Master's feet, confessing that we have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin. But what has been the secret of our failure? Have our resources been insufficient, or our organization ineffective, or our Gospel untrue? No, none of these things. It is our faith that has been weak.

For faith is the trumpet-call that wakes the Christian Church to battle. A Church whose faith has grown weak will mistake cowardly timidity for wise caution, she will cling to the

present because she fears the future, she will turn from the great adventure to link her life to the things that are passing away. That is our danger, and our deliverance is the re-awakening of faith. For ever, as we move, the mountains loom as dark barriers before us. Like Childe Roland of Browning's poem, we find that "the plain has given place all round to mountains"—

> "The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay
> Chin upon hand, to see the game at play,
> Now stab and end the creature—to the heft."

Can we put our slug-horn dauntlessly to our lips and blow the mighty blast that shall shatter the barrier? If ye had faith——?

There is a special application of the text that will be in all your minds this morning. For years the nations of Europe have been confronted by the mountain of mutual suspicion, and resources solely needed for nobler purposes have been diverted to the piling up of vast armaments. Yet if we would only allow our faith in God to lead us to larger faith in our fellowmen how rapidly the mountain might remove and be cast into the sea.

Our hearts have been thrilled this last week[1]

[1] The Arbitration Treaty with the United States. The words that follow have been only too sadly fulfilled by the action of the U.S. Senate.

at the thought of such a possibility. For the moment hope and courage are in the ascendant, but in a little while the old ungenerous distrust will reassert itself, a section of the world's Press will take up the devil's work of sowing suspicion among nations, and unless we resolutely maintain our ground, the mountain will re-establish itself. It is not enough to welcome for the moment the proposal for wider arbitration, we must work for it and pray for it, steadily, perseveringly. The proposal comes as a challenge to our faith. Are we prepared to meet it with a whole-hearted response ?

Consider the special character of faith. It is not the easy optimism that thinks that it can conquer difficulties by ignoring them. It knows that the mountain is there. You cannot live the life of faith by a process of self-deception, for faith is always true to fact.

> " Play no tricks upon thy soul, O man ;
> Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can."

Our Lord did not heal the sick by teaching them that they were not sick, nor cleanse the sinful by teaching them that sin was a mere illusion. God shows His wisdom when He calleth the things that are not as though they were ; but man shows his foolishness when he calls the things

that are as though they were not. And, on the other hand, faith is not the dreary fatalism that saps the moral vitality of the man that yields to its influence. It does not say that the mountain is there and we have no power to change it. For faith asserts the supremacy of the spiritual; it is the deliverance of the soul from the tyranny of things. So it welcomes the challenge of the mountains, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." And before the march of the King "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low."

Christianity is the one religion of the world that can make no terms with fatalism. For when Jesus Christ taught us to call God our Father, he taught us to look for Mind and Will as the ruling forces behind natural law; He taught us that we were not slaves in a universe of slaves, but free men in the kingdom of our Father. Faith is not resignation but the indignant protest of the spirit against all that obstructs and offends the Divine love. Because I believe in God I know that selfishness and impurity and covetousness and pride have no rightful place in the world that God has made, and that I must wage implacable war against them

unto my life's end—aye, and beyond it too, if God will. And I know that the war is not a vain struggle against destiny, but a contest in which each man's service really counts towards the final issue. Faith simply means throwing myself unreservedly on God's side in the struggle with sin.

And then, lastly, faith is not the careless self-confidence that goes out to the battle in its own strength, like those seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, who took upon themselves to call over those possessed with demons the name of Jesus —with results disastrous to themselves. Faith is the instinct by which the soul, in utter self-distrust throws itself back upon God. "I can do all things"—how ludicrous and arrogant the claim sounds till we add the words that complete the sentence—"through Christ Who strengtheneth me." Nothing in our own strength! The mere atoms despise us; the mountains tower aloft regardless of our challenge. But all things in the strength of Christ.

"This is the conquest that has conquered the world, even our faith"—not our Creed as an objective fact, but our Creed as verified by experience, the ringing challenge that asserts that all human effort that tries to organize itself without the recognition of God must fail because it ignores

the supreme fact. Without faith we cannot hope to stand successfully for social righteousness and the ideal of human brotherhood; without faith we cannot hope to revise our Prayer Book in the light of modern needs; without faith we cannot interpret our Creeds afresh to minds to whom the archaic language, full of the echoes of ancient contest, does not ring true. But with faith we can do all these things—and greater things than these.

But is this true? That, after all, is the supreme question. We cannot nourish our souls on illusions, however beautiful. Can faith do these things? My brothers, we must answer that question, each one for himself. You remember how the early disciples answered it as they returned from their missionary tour with a new sense of gladness, saying, "Even the demons are subject to us in Thy name." The proof must begin within our own lives. You know what mountain stands to-day across the path of your life, and you know how often you have been tempted to acquiesce—to say, "Beyond this limit I cannot advance; here is my frontier line." But if you believe in God you know that God does not mean your life to stand still for ever severed from its true goal. Alone we are impotent, but if we will dare to commit our lives

unreservedly to God and move forward the dark barrier will dissolve,

> "And like some unsubstantial pageant faded
> Leave not a wrack behind."

Faith is a great assumption verified in the experience of life. And only when we have proved its power in our own lives can we hope to prove it in the life of the Christian society. If you want to know how the early Church verified it, read Mr. Edghill's little book, just published, *The Spirit of Power*. And what the Church of the second century did the Church of each age has to do over again. It is not more expert advice, or more counsels of expediency, or more multiplying of organizations, that we need—it is men of faith, to lead us—men like those that Matthew Arnold describes in the closing lines of *Rugby Chapel*. Mountains of apathy, of prejudice, and misunderstanding, frown down on us as we advance, and the faint-hearted cry to us to stand still lest the mountains fall on us. And still the voice speaks to us: "If ye had faith, ye should say to this mountain, 'Be thou removed and cast into the sea; and it shall be done."

The spies come back still to tell us of the manifold perils of the advance. Party organizations

on the right hand and on the left threaten us with disruption and rebellion from within. Shall we listen and turn back, and leave to our children the task that is ours by the call of God? Or shall we see in the difficulties that lie before us a call to close up our ranks, to reconsecrate ourselves to the service of Christ, to move forward not in scattered companies but as a united army, believing in the future because we believe in God. So to-day there comes to each of us the familiar invitation that bids us "draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to our comfort." "With faith" because between us and that Holy Presence rises the great mountain of our unworthiness and sin. We cannot draw near while the dark barrier stands between. But let faith send forth its challenge, and the great mountain will remove, and plunge and be lost for ever in the bottomless ocean of the Divine Love, and we shall pass on with gladness into the presence of the King.

VIII

THE MIRACULOUS ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY[1]

"If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin."—JOHN xv. 24.

I WANT to say something to-night about the demand for a non-miraculous Christianity. The demand is one that comes to us from various directions. It is widely believed that if we are to commend our religion to the modern man we must present it to him unencumbered by the miraculous. And not a few sincere believers in the Christian creed have laboured to construct a Gospel purged of the element of miracle.

The ordinary man finds his strongest argument against miracles in his own experience. Miracles do not happen now, it is therefore inherently improbable that they ever happened. They are the religious fairy-tales of the race. and like the gnomes and elves of fairyland they have

[1] Preached in St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford.

vanished out of the realm of the actual. And how much is left still? Human reason may now meditate on the ethical principles of Christianity without fear of being disturbed by the intrusion of irrational and surprising things. We have safely fenced in the wild corner of our garden of life that once seemed to lead straight on into the infinite.

Well, but suppose after all it was just that wild corner that used to give your garden its value; suppose that it was through that tangled path among the ferns that God used to come to walk in His garden in the cool of the day. What if our non-miraculous Christianity should prove after all to be Christianity with the real meaning out of it?

What does modern life ask of religion? On every side the machinery of things has been closing down upon us. Science tells us of a Universe ruled by law—of an ordered sequence of things that moves on its way regardless of all we can do. And the immense complexity of the social organism brings us the same feeling of a vast machine in which human volition is almost lost. And for most men the business of life lies in the complex machinery of industry and commerce. Everywhere things go on, and our hearts grow burdened with "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world."

Is there no escape? The dark shadow of fatalism hangs heavy over modern life; men find strength to endure in the thought that things cannot be otherwise. And thus the power of moral energy is sapped, and even God vanishes at last in a vague Pantheistic mist.

And then through this nightmare comes the message of Christianity—Christianity with all its miracles, with its keen ringing challenge to the mechanical conception of things, with its story of One who healed the sick and raised the dead and walked on the waves, Who made the world of things subject to His will. At last we are out of the mist; we breathe the mountain air; we know that man was made not to be the slave of things, but their master.

That is what miracle means. It means the reassertion of the supremacy of the spirit; it means the enlargement of our whole conception of things. The men who stood by Jesus Christ when He said to the lame "Arise and walk," or to the waves, "Peace, be still," must have felt

> "Like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken."

So Christianity grew up in the atmosphere of a miracle.

Yes, reply the critics, the instinctive desire

for the marvellous came into exercise, and out of the simple facts of a beautiful human life created this legend of a wonder-working Christ. The need created the supply.

How are we to meet this assertion? There is, of course, the answer of the historian, that whatever evidence we have of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth is evidence of a Jesus who worked miracles. But I do not want to lay stress on that answer now. I want to suggest another way of meeting the challenge. I said that what we asked of our religion was just the assurance of the supremacy of the spirit that miracles afford. But that means that we do not ask for the merely marvellous. It would be no satisfaction to our soul's need to be told that the ordinary uniformities of nature, on which we habitually depend, had been set aside in favour of mere caprice. It is not the abnormal that we want. But we do want some rift in the cloud through which we can, if only for a moment, see the sunshine beyond. We do want the assurance that there is an order higher than our own; an order in which the crooked things shall be made straight and the rough places plain; and that when this order touches human life it touches it in benediction.

It is because the miracles of the Gospels are of

this kind that we offer no apology for our belief that they are neither allegories nor fairy tales. If God intervened in human life, what form would His intervention take? That is the question to which the miracles of Jesus Christ are the answer. God's intervention could not be grotesque, or meaningless, or cruel, as are not a few of the miracles related in the apocryphal Gospels. If God intervened—and the whole significance of Christianity depends on the fact that God did so intervene; that is why the attempt to build up a non-miraculous Christianity is doomed to failure. For if once the supreme miracle of the Incarnation be admitted, it is inherently probable that the whole atmosphere of the Incarnate life would be an atmosphere not of abnormal, but, if you will, of super-normal action. We cannot make Christianity more credible by admitting a supernatural Christ while we deny His supernatural activities.

And this is true of the two supreme miracles that stand at the beginning and end of that life. Something to tell us that the true life is "born from above," something to lift the mystery of human birth into the sphere of spiritual things, something to show us, however dimly, that there is a way into human life from above as well as from beneath, might surely be expected to

belong to a Divine intervention. And so, again, some lifting of the veil that hides all that lies beyond death, some evidence that humanity has a place in the spiritual world, that Divine love has cancelled that stern decree, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return," might surely be expected to crown the revelation of the Divine through a human life.

I am not trying now to prove to you that these things are true; I am trying to show that Christianity without them is impoverished of just what we most need. We can be content to accept the limitation that excludes miracles from our ordinary experience to-day if we may believe that the Divine Sovereignty over material things was asserted once in human history in the miraculous life of Christ. Deprive us of that outlook into the larger world of eternal reality, and the tyranny of things is upon us.

For what is faith, after all, but the resolute assertion, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, that a personal life is beyond the phenomena that our senses present to us. The Christian man may make his own Napoleon's famous boast, "I know no such word as impossible." For there is all the difference in the world between a uniformity which is, so to speak, a habit of the Divine mind, and a uniformity that is the out-

come of blank necessity. When the man of science tells us, "It is thus that God is wont to work," we feel that he is enriching the content of our religious consciousness, but if he tells us "these things are necessarily so," we feel that he is the enemy of faith.

Why do I say all this to you to-day? Because the denial of the miraculous is often the outcome of a subtle form of intellectual pride, and the first requirement of the true student is humility. It is the most competent scholar who is often most diffident about his own conclusions; it is the deepest student of nature who is least willing to dogmatize about what lies beyond the little about which he can speak with confidence. The demand for a non-miraculous Christianity is often the demand for a religion brought down to the level of what we can estimate and understand. But the whole value of religion depends on the fact that it opens up vistas into the infinite. Do you see now what Jesus meant when He said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"?

Half the charm of the fairyland of our childhood lay in the two words. "Let's pretend." For they made us masters of our little kingdom.

Things were what we commanded them to be. Yet we knew even then, and we have learnt more and more in all the years between, that "things are what they are." Oh, life, that hast taken away our fairyland, hast thou nothing to give us in return? Yes, life will show us the reality of which our fairyland was only a reflection. When we lift up our heads, weary of "torturing the unwilling dross" to serve the needs of men, we may, if we will, catch glimpses of a Divine order in which the moral law of the spirit is supreme. But the only doorway that leads into the realm of Divine order is the doorway of humility. You must look up to Jesus Christ if you want to learn of Him. If we begin by putting Him on a level with ourselves, ignoring the tremendous reserve of power that makes Him so vastly greater than any of the wonderful works that He did, we shall miss the whole meaning of His life.

So the question that lies behind the controversy about miracle is the fundamental question of Christianity, Did God intervene? Was the uniformity of things shaken by a breaking-in of spiritual forces from above, as the vineyards are shaken by an earthquake? The vines spread out their tendrils again, and the soft earth covers the fissures, and all seems as

before. But there is left the consciousness of great forces moving underneath, unrealized before. So through the works of Jesus Christ men became conscious of great spiritual forces moving above the common things of life.

Yet, though miracle has its place in the Christian revelation, it is not the supreme place. Wonders and signs lie on the frontiers of the world of spirit, they are windows through which we look, doors through which we enter. The Kingdom is greater than its signs. This is the special thought of the Fourth Gospel. When the spiritual world touches the world of sense it acts according to its own laws—it restores, it renews, it enriches. And with a thrill of sudden gladness the man whose spiritual nature is awake becomes conscious that he has seen a glimpse of his true home. This is the world to which we belong—not the world where men sin and suffer, and are hungry, and blind, and lame ; but the world where men are forgiven and cleansed, and where the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and good news is preached to the poor. Tell us that there is such a world, that it was the world out of which the Divine stooped down to us, then there is a motive for effort and an inspiration for service ; then all that heals, and

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saves, and restores, and forgives here on earth is part of the eternal fact manifest as yet only in broken fragments. A non-miraculous Christianity will not give men what they need most—the assurance of a larger life, where human ignorance is enlightened and human sinfulness is cleansed, and human impotence is empowered.

"Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not the life God fashions or reveals,
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!"

Jesus Christ told men what the spiritual world was like in His teaching; He showed them what it was like in His miracles. We cannot do yet the works that He did, for we do not yet live the life that He lived. But just as He left us in His teaching an ideal of personal character to which we reach up every day with growing desire, so He left us, in His miracles, an ideal of power in service that makes the impotence of to-day endurable in the light of the power that He holds in trust for us till we have been trained by the discipline of life to use it wisely. "He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall he do also." But being comes before doing; the man who would partake of the power of Christ must first partake of the character of

Christ. So miracles begin in the moral world, in the transformation of human character; the turn of the physical world will come, for "the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God."

IX

THE SACRAMENT OF REALIZATION

"He was known of them in breaking of bread."—St. Luke xxiv. 35.

I WANT you to turn with me for a little while to the story of those two disciples on the way to Emmaus, as St. Luke tells us of them. I want you to consider them because I think we may find in the story the record of the Church's doctrine of the real presence as it was realized in the experience of her life.

Notice first of all this, that they were men whose hearts rang true. Their intellectual grasp of things was shaken, preconceived ideas that were very deeply rooted in their nature had been overturned. They had wellnigh lost hope. What remained?

Just this remained—their strong, deep, loyalty to the memory of what they had believed. They thought that they had lost their Lord, but they knew that in losing Him they had lost the "master light of all their seeing." Do you think that if

they had been able to say, "We were young and foolish, and we pinned our faith to a delusion; now we have awakened and contentedly recognize that it was all a dream"—do you think that if they had been able to say that, Jesus Himself would have drawn near and gone with them?

They were sad—sad because they had walked with Christ, and found life dark without Him—because they had seen that which leaves a man for ever unsatisfied till he see it again. Yet the foundations of their faith were shaken. They had been students of the Scriptures, and they had found there great words about deliverance and triumph. And then they had seen One Who seemed to be the fulfilment of all these words. They had staked their all on His success, and now disaster had come. And so they must have asked themselves, "Was all our trust in the Scriptures a delusion—must we close the book and store it sadly away among life's lost illusions?"

And not only were they loyal-hearted men, they were honest men too. They would not delude themselves with false hopes. The issues at stake were too vital to allow them to take refuge in vague phrases. They knew—companionship with Christ had taught them to know—that only men who face facts fairly will ever find the truth.

I lay some stress on the intellectual attitude of these men because I think it represents an attitude of mind very characteristic of our own time. Blatant infidelity and aggressive attacks of the Christian faith are not perhaps as common now as a few years ago. But over many lives there broods the "quiet sense of something lost." "He lived while we believed" but "now He is dead," is the unspoken confession of many a man to-day. He came to us in the first fresh morning of our youth, and our lives leapt to respond to His challenge. Our Bibles were living books to us because they told us of Him. We wondered that the world did not respond at once to a call so loving and so strong. We dreamed of how a Christian age might be dawning, when ignorance and injustice and wrong would flee before His coming. Yes! "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel."

Or again, for ourselves. How much we meant to do and be. How easy then seemed the way of the Cross; how lightly we esteemed the difficulties of the contest.

Well, it is all past now! We cannot read our Bible as we read it once for our faith in its infallibility has been shaken. It is easy to denounce Higher Criticism from our pulpits or in our press,

but remember that in spite of our denunciations, it will go on, and with it will go on the shaking of men's faith in the Bible. We must have some word to say to men who like these disciples have found the ground, as they think, giving way beneath them.

"They have taken away my Lord." That is the secret complaint of many a soul to-day. I go to find Him in my Bible, and His figure seems vanishing in a mist of uncertain legend; I go to find Him in the Churches, and I find only a great machinery of ritual, and in the midst a dead Christ laid on a strange altar; I go to find Him in the common ways of men, and they speak only of One who once went about doing good, but Whose sepulchre alone remains to us now.

What does God ask of such men—men pressed down with the strange perplexities of a new age—"wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other"—so it seems—"powerless to be born"?

The answer is in the story. He asks, first of all, loyal hearts. Remember Bishop Blougram's challenge—

"What think ye of Christ, friend? When all's done and said,
Like you this Christianity or not?
It may be false, but will you wish it true?
Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

That is the real question. Is it a relief to think that there is no longer any Christ moving among us, with deep, solemn eyes that see through all human shams, and ears that can hear the fainter sighs of need that are the undertone of our noisy self-congratulations of to-day. Or is it a great sorrow that He does not seem to be here?

Can we say with the poet:—

> "All my days I'll go the softlier, sadlier,
> For that dream's sake! How forget the thrill
> Through and through me as I thought 'The gladlier
> Lives my friend because I love him still'"?

It is not agony of soul—not the groping of hands that feel feebly through the dark—not the parched lips that cry "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"—it is not these that are the signs of a soul that is perishing, but the contented acquiescence in lowered ideals, the lips that smile in scorn over lost hopes, the hands that, losing Christ, are filled with unprofitable things.

He asks for loyal hearts, and He asks for honest hearts—not afraid to face facts. It would be an evil day for the Church of England if ever she attempted to shut the door against any honest inquiry or used her authority to suppress or discourage the constant re-examination of her

credentials. There will be mistaken verdicts, rash challenges to accepted beliefs, theories that will not last, guesses that do not reach the truth. Better all this—a hundred times better—than the stagnation of a timid orthodoxy that dare not come out into the daylight.

In every time of change there are men ready to cry out that the faith is perishing. Yet Christ still walks with every honest man whose sole aim is to " creep ever on from fancies to the fact." And if we turn out of our Church one such honest man who claims the right to stay there, let us beware lest Christ go out with him—and we be left alone.

They were loyal men and they were honest men, and therefore Christ came to them. And the first sign that He had come was that familiar things began to take on a new meaning. The Scriptures were given back to them again, not as they were before but charged with deeper meaning. Nothing was lost save illusions that had obscured from them the reality. So it was by the transformation of familiar things that the risen Lord came back to His disciples. And it is in the transformation of familiar things that He comes still to hearts that are waiting for him—through creeds that we have repeated from childhood, through ceremonials in which we

have shared a hundred times, along roads beaten by the tread of many feet—so He comes to us. And we know only that the burden is lightened, that sorrow and disappointment and the breaking of dreams begin to have a meaning, that resentment and bitterness pass, and we are strong again. We realize that in the secret centre of our lives we are not alone.

Thank God, we are not asked to believe that it is only in lives that are conscious of His presence that the Divine dwells—that our realization is the measure of God's possibility.

So we come to the special thought of our text—"He was known of them in breaking of bread." I know it is a disputed point whether we are to regard this breaking of bread as a Eucharist, but at the time that this gospel was written "the breaking of bread" had become the recognized name for the Holy Communion. And I cannot but think that the Church saw in these words the record of a fact that she had proved true in her own experience. For she had found in the Eucharist a realized presence of Christ. A realized presence—because the Church did not believe that at the Eucharist there was vouchsafed to her a special and unfamiliar presence, strange, temporary, abnormal. She believed that at the Eucharist the presence which was an

abiding reality revealed itself to faithful hearts. She believed that He still walked with men along familiar ways, expounding unto them the Scriptures till their hearts glowed with a gladness that they could not understand; and that through His own appointed channel He interpreted the meaning of that gladness in the realization of His presence.

Does not all this accord with our own experience? Is it not at Holy Communion that we look back over our lives and see how they have been uplifted and taught and gladdened by a Divine presence that we did not recognize?

Only those who have resolutely tried know how hard—I had almost said how impossible—it is to live in the constant realization of the unseen. We cannot turn our backs on the ordinary business of life—its conventions and claims are round us all day long—we are like divers groping in the half-dark amid the tangled seaweed on the sea bottom—too far down to see the boat anchored above them in the sunlight. We live by faith, not by sight.

Yet every life needs its moments of realization—moments when it shall concentrate its power on the task of seeing Him who is invisible. Without this our spiritual energies flag; we become the mere slaves of our surroundings; the tangled

seaweed sucks us down and in the dark heart of it we are stifled.

And such moments come to us by the express provision of Christ. "He is known of us in breaking of bread."

I know that this does not exhaust the significance of the Eucharist. I know that the life realized must become the life received. But I suppose the Eucharist associated itself first of all in the mind of the Church with the fact of the Resurrection. For it told of a Christ ubiquitous in His power to bless. "He is risen; He hath ascended; He sitteth at the right hand of the Father"—so the Church confessed in her creeds. Yet He is here; He is among us; "He is known of us in the breaking of bread." And so there comes back into human lives all the lost romance that we thought had been left behind us. For what is romance but the haunting sense of the spiritual reality behind things. And if in every Communion we renew our realization of the presence of Christ, will not the glory of that realization transform the common day, lift it above all that is squalid and mean and base, give to all its commonplace duties a new consecration? We wrong our own lives, and we wrong the world that we are here to help, when we neglect this resetting of our lives in tune with the Infinite.

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you." How well that describes many Christian lives—good honest lives—yet with no clear grasp of spiritual realities; no faith to dare great things; no power of challenge to the incredulity of the world.

But what is gained by realization? If He is with us when we do not know, is not that unrecognized presence enough?

What is gained? First of all, the realization of our faithlessness. We remember with shame how nearly we gave up, how timidly we said that some people believed that He was alive, how unwilling we were to abandon our own theories and ideas. Aye, and darker memories than these—of things done that we would rather have cut off our right hands than have done if we had known that He was with us. The punishment of sin is the realization of sin. Happy is the man who finds that punishment waiting for him where Christ the Saviour-Judge reveals Himself at the breaking of bread. For there he shall learn the greatness of his own sin at the place where he learns also the greatness of the Divine love.

And secondly, gratitude. It is not good that things provided should come without the sweet sense of providing—not good that we should be

every day dependent upon God and never realize the truth. It was by a true instinct that the Church took hold of that thought and added to the names of the Lord's Supper the new name of the Eucharist. It is the service of thanksgiving because it is the service of realization. "Our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving"—our only gift—the Easter offering of the Church to her risen Lord, renewed every Sunday in the breaking of bread.

And lastly, the power of witness. "They rose up at the same hour and returned to Jerusalem"—and "they told what things were done in the way." No man can speak convincingly to any other man of things that he has not realized. What power of help is there in the vague generalities, and empty platitudes, of men who speak what they do not know, and testify what they have not seen? One word of personal testimony is worth them all.

It was the special purpose of our Lord in those forty days to lead His disciples into the habit of realization, so that it might become the most natural thing for them at any moment to say to themselves "I am in the presence of Christ, my Lord." And He began that process of training when He broke bread on that first Easter evening. And for us too, our training

in the habit of realization begins with the breaking of bread. Begins—for it does not end there. For he who rightly learns the lesson of that Holy Sacrament shall find the Divine presence at his table at every meal, by his side on every familiar road, making the common things of life sacramental.

So He leads us still, if we will follow—through illusions to truth, through perplexity to realization, through sorrow to joy.

X

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KNOWLEDGE[1]

"One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."—St. Mark x. 21.

SOMETIMES it happens in life that two people may live together in apparent agreement for long, till some word or act becomes as a lightning flash, illuminating the abyss that lies between them. Even so the student of the Gospels sees the figure of our Lord moving among the social conventions of His own time, accepting them with apparent approval, till suddenly some word of His reveals the fundamental antagonism between these conventions and the laws of His Kingdom. Just such a moment of revelation is this meeting with the rich young ruler. For Christ's command was a challenge going down to the foundation of the social structure—the

[1] Preached before the University of Cambridge at the time of the University Extension Summer Meeting.

note of a revolution more profound than we even yet realize. It was so that the disciples understood it, and hence their perplexed question, "Who then can be saved?"

For it sets up a new test of character and a new ideal of greatness.

I. It sets up a new test of character—for it makes not action, but attitude, the significant thing. To the question, "What kind of thing shall I do?" it opposes the question, "What kind of man will you be?" For to be the kind of man who would without hesitation obey the command is to be the kind of man for whom the command is no longer needed. Eternal life is not the reward of right doing, but the result of right being. Now and then in life a man is called to some act, some decision, that brings to a focus his whole attitude towards things, his whole philosophy of life. The decision that he makes then is his own judgment on his whole life. And when a man came into contact with Christ he was compelled thus to pass judgment on himself—to define his attitude. Peter, on his knees in his fisherman's hut, Zacchæus by his sycamore tree, Pilate on his judgment-seat—they judge themselves.

It is possible for a man to be very satisfied with the soundness of his attitude towards life and yet to discover, when the sudden challenge

comes, that his whole point of view is fundamentally out of sympathy with the standpoint of Christ. "You have done right,"—that our Lord accepts as true—"you have kept the commandments from your youth." But what if all the time your whole attitude has been wrong? And so it proves to be when that life is brought under the stern, loving hands of the good Physician. All looks so well, but there is the secret disease all the time. It is not enough to do as Christ did; you must first learn to feel as He felt.

II. It sets up a new standard of greatness. Here is a man who has been accustomed all his life long to deference and respect on account of his great wealth, to whom this deference and respect has come to appear natural and right. And suddenly the challenge comes to him to divest himself of all that has constituted his claim to distinction, and take his place among the mere multitude of men—to learn that he was of value to God not for what he had but only for what he was.

For here lies the great divergence between the world's conception of things and Christ's. In the world respect and deference is accorded to men in virtue of that in which they differ from each other; in the Kingdom of Heaven men's claim to respect depends on what they all share—

the common humanity that was assumed at the Incarnation by the Son of God.

It was one of the most inspiring articles of Wordsworth's social creed that the common humanity in which we all share is vastly greater and more noble than the distinctions that separate us from each other.

For eighteen centuries men have tried from time to time to explain away the benediction pronounced by our Lord on the poor. Even as early as the time of the publication of St. Matthew's Gospel we can see the beginning of the process. But if what I have said is true, it is easy to understand why He pronounced the poor to be blessed. For if a man is great in virtue of what he shares with other men, they may well be accounted blessed whose sole asset is just this common humanity; to whom fortune has denied the opportunity of raising barriers of rank or wealth to save them from the common life of men. Surely it is significant that our Lord chose to be born into a social rank cut off both from the degrading influence of grinding poverty and the corrupting influence of great wealth, and it was from this class that He chose the men who were to be His closest companions. When Wordsworth looked for types of true human character among Cumberland dalesmen and shepherds,

he was only following in the footsteps of Him Who chose just such men as His closest companions and the founders and leaders of His Kingdom.

And it was the same lesson He taught when He set a little child in the midst of His disciples as a picture of what was to be esteemed greatest in His Kingdom. For a little child is humanity unspoiled by the artificial conventions of life.

We have all found, and found with secret shame, how hard it is to impose on the mind of a little child the miserable code of social restrictions that we have made for ourselves. For the heart of every child responds to the communism of a larger humanity—the communism of Christ.

So again, when the disciples returned from their first missionary tour, rejoicing over the new powers of which they had found themselves possessed, He bade them rejoice not over that in which they differed from other men, but over that in which they were one with the whole body of His followers: rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.

All that I am saying now is so much of a commonplace that I almost hesitate to say it, but conceive how profound a revolution the mere acceptance of this principle of our Lord would make—its acceptance not only here, where, thank God, it is so largely the principle of University

life, but outside in the whole life of the nation. If mere wealth or rank no longer conferred the right to deference or respect men would cease to desire these things and so be free to desire better things, our whole social standard would be readjusted; poverty would bring no sense of degradation to make it bitter, and men might even come to feel that anything more than a modest competence was a burden of responsibility from which a man might pray to be free.

All this might be, if only our social ideas were conformed to the standard of Christ.

But I want to-day to apply the words of Christ to another kind of wealth. Those who for the last few weeks have been our guests here will think of the University man as of a man who has great possessions. They have seen our laboratories and our libraries, they have felt the agelong associations of learning that cling to these walls and gateways; they have trod the

> "Ground where the grass has yielded to the feet
> Of generations of illustrious men."

This—all this—is our wealth. And it was because some of our leaders here heard the same voice that bade the young ruler sell all he had and give to the poor, calling to us to place our great possessions within reach of those who had need, that this University Extension Movement

first began. For a University may all too easily acquire the habit of hoarding its treasures, and become satisfied with ministering to the needs of an intellectual aristocracy. May I not claim that the Extension movement has helped to save this our University from the danger—to keep it in touch with the intellectual needs of the people?

Yet still the call of Christ comes to us along the corridors of time. There is no limit to the claim He makes on those who have, in the name of those who need. "Go and sell, go and give, go and share." How we can respond to that call it is for you, our wisest, to consider.

There are some among us who resent the challenge of the larger world, who dream of a little fortress of culture and research, secure and self-contained, against whose battlements the angry seas may roar in vain. But there are others among us who dream of an ever-increasing response to the call of Christ, of great possessions made available more and more fully for an Empire's needs, of our University as the centre of a world-wide brotherhood of learning and service.

And to us, too, as members of the Christian Society, does there not come sometimes a whisper that seems to bring to us the same challenge? Have we allowed our great possessions of privilege and security, our assured place in the social order,

to build a barrier between us and the hungry thousands that He has sent us to feed? Have we been content to sacrifice our true place as the Church of the people to the desire for soft raiment in kings' houses? When we hear men defend the inordinate incomes of our Bishops on the ground that they are enabled thus to meet on equal terms the more opulent Churchmen of their Diocese, or when we realize how the entanglement of the Church in the existing social order hinders her in protesting against great social wrongs, then we seem to hear again the words of Christ, "One thing thou lackest." Go and sell, go and give, go and share. For to institutions, no less than to individuals, there come testing-times when they must choose whether to cling to privileges and immunities that are stifling their true life, or to throw them aside, and ask instead for the better treasure of the trust and love of the people.

And as these are the things we want to say to ourselves, are they not the things we desire to say to those whom a desire to share in our wealth has gathered here for the last three weeks? For there is a real danger that the awakening desire for education, of which we see so many signs, may lose its high idealism, and be content to ask for what can be turned to personal advantage. But

an education that takes a man out of sympathy with the common life of men, that creates a barrier of separation instead of a bond of union, stands condemned by its inability to respond to the test and challenge of Christ. For all true education means the flowing forth of personal life through ever-widening channels of service.

Something of the passion of a great crusade is in it, something of the thrill of the martyr-spirit. It has the Divine compassion for the multitude who are as sheep having no shepherd, and it desires us to teach them many things. This is the stimulus that the Christian scholar has always with him. It hovers as a shekinah over the laboratory and the library, it leads as a pillar of fire along the desert paths where he must go alone to break the way for all the rest.

And this association of service with self-improvement will keep the whole standard of our work high. It will be our great safeguard against superficiality and intellectual shallowness. For you must gather true treasures if you are to offer them for the needs of men. You must build your bridges strong if the feet of a great army is to pass over them.

Ten years of close experience of the University Extension Movement perhaps gives me the right to say that it is just this association of service

and self-improvement that has been the marked characteristic of the movement wherever it has really taken root. Where it has been taken up in the mere dilettanti spirit it has generally died out again after a very little while. It has lived where it has caught the note of service, and heard the challenge of Christ.

Can there be a nobler task to which any great educational organization can be called than the task of linking together the work of educational progress and the work of social reform? For they cannot—we all see it clearly now—they cannot be separated. It is an appalling thought that in this England of ours there are millions—yes, surely millions—whose bodies are so ill-nourished with necessary food that the actual physical machinery of the mind is too enfeebled to be able to respond to any call to intellectual effort. We cannot make truce with such facts as these.

I might stop here, but I must not. I must not, for it would not be loyal to leave one half of the truth unsaid. "Come, follow Me." Social service and educational progress are not enough if they lack the consecration of self-surrender to the highest and the best. As we look out on all the seething world of social unrest and hope, as we see long-standing ideas challenged and ancient landmarks swept away, ever there rises in our

hearts the question, What master-passion is to guide the onward march of this strange new world? Shall it be the old hideous master-passion, the lust of gold or conquest? Or the master passion of a new brotherhood of humanity? But there can be no real brotherhood of humanity that does not find its true meaning and consecration in the devotion of a man's life to the ideal humanity, which is Christ. We do not believe, we would not desire to be thought to believe, that the complex nature of man can find its adequate wealth in food for the body and food for the mind. These it must have, for without these it cannot live. But in Browning's great poem, *Cleon*, we can read the despair of the old Greek world that felt that it had reached the summit only to perish there. There is a beautiful poem of Shelley's where he pictures himself as dreaming that he is gathering flowers—the rich harvest of some beautiful dream-garden—gathering them to present them, "oh! to whom?" It is not enough to urge men to gather the flowers of art and thought unless you can give them the answer to that question.

"Come, follow Me." Can any impartial observer, watching the course of life and thought in England to-day, fail to see how over all the scene of change the figure of Jesus Christ of Naza-

reth, Son of God and Saviour of the world, towers colossal. New doubts have come as to the date and historical veracity of parts of the Gospel story, new doubts as to the permanent value of the forms in which earlier ages expressed their creeds, new doubts as to the adequacy of the Church's interpretation of the Christian truth. Much is uncertain that once seemed sure ; much obscure that once seemed clear. But beyond it all, larger than our definitions, stands the supreme fact of the life of Jesus Christ. The hope of the world is still in His keeping, the cause of the poor is still in His heart. The scattered forces that make for social good and larger brotherhood can find no other rallying point than in the command, " Come, take up the Cross and follow Me."

Go and share, then come and follow ; go and sell the great possessions that minister to selfish isolation and pride, come to take up the Cross that speaks of the common heritage of suffering and humility, and honour won through sacrifice.

And if sometimes the forces arrayed against us seem too strong, let us fling out the passion of social service, which is the heart of Christ, far before us into the thick of the fight with the cry of Douglas, as he flung the heart of the Bruce into the thick of the Moslem hosts, " Onward as thou wert wont, brave heart ; we will follow thee."

XI

THE CONSECRATION OF THE BODY

"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."—1 Cor. ix. 27.

THERE are three views of the relation of the body to the soul that have at different times moulded human thought. The first of these is what may be called the Greek view. To the Greek the life of the body was the true life, and with the death of the body it ceased. True, Homer does picture the dead as moving drearily through the world of shadows, but it is a mere phantom life that remains to them when the sunshine and song, the rich, many-sided human life is over. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is no parody of the thought of the Greek world. For here is natural man at his best.

But side by side with this grows up the teaching of the Philosophers, and to them the body was not the centre of, but the obstacle to, true life. Socrates on his deathbed discourses on the joy

of deliverance from the degradation of the body. "The wise man is entirely concerned with the soul and would like to be altogether delivered from the body."

And in this view the Greek Philosopher is at one with the Eastern world, with Buddha and the doctrines of Brahmanism. To all these alike the body is the dwelling-place of sin, illusion. Salvation is attained when the body is left behind and the soul is set free.

We scarcely recognize, perhaps, how deeply these ideas have at various times influenced the Christian Church. They lay at the root of the Gnosticism of the second century, and they revived in Manichæism. St. Augustine, who never shook himself wholly free from the Manichæism of his early life, passed down to mediæval theology the dangerous tendency to treat the material as the enemy of the spiritual. The Renaissance with its frank proclamation of "the value and significance of flesh," took its revenge on the false asceticism that had entered into the monastic ideal. Then came the reaction of Puritanism with its strongly Manichæan tendency. Even now English religious thought is much more Manichæan than it realizes.

But this whole conception of things is alien to true Christian thought. When the

Church contended, against the Docetics, for the reality of the humanity of Christ, when she asserted that He was born of the Virgin Mary, she was contending for the truth that there is in human physical nature nothing that made it incapable of union with the Divine. Matter is not the enemy of spirit, but the means whereby spirit manifests itself. As the world is "the visible garment of God," so a human body was the "visible garment" of Christ. And the protest of the Incarnation against the degradation of the material is maintained in the sacramental system of the Church. How can a Church be Manichæan while it teaches us to pray "Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin," and links its deepest thoughts about communion with God to "these His creatures of bread and wine"?

No. Once for all the Christian faith delivers us from the delusion that evil is something inherent in the material world. It is the will that makes the body the instrument of its purposes, that indulges impulses that exist to be guided and restrained. He that is unjust will be unjust still, even though he may have no body as the instrument of unjust deeds; he that is filthy will be filthy still though bodily sensations may no longer minister to his uncleanness.

What, then, is the body? It is the particular section of the material world over which each man reigns as king, what Tennyson calls the "province of the brute" that each man must rule and guide and tame.

From that responsibility no man can escape.

It follows from all this that the asceticism that aims at the gradual destruction of the effective powers of the body is fundamentally unchristian. The man who deliberately lays waste his "province of the brute" is no true steward of the estate committed to him.

Is Christianity, then, a gospel of self-indulgence? Is it the restoration of the gay, lighthearted life of the Greek world?

No, for the "province of the brute" must be ruled if life is to fulfil its true purpose. It is a false spirituality that leaves this task undone while it follows a more adventurous quest.

> "The king must guard
> That which he rules, and is but as the hind
> To whom a space of land is given to plow,
> Who may not wander from the allotted field
> Before his work be done.

Christian asceticism is the asceticism of self-control.

Do you not see why Christian Science has come as a veritable gospel of hope to thousands of

people? It is because Christian Science has got hold of this truth that man is meant to control his body, not to be controlled by it. When a man says that he cannot give up the use of alcohol or smoking, that he cannot keep any rule of fasting, he is practically confessing that he has failed in the primary task that God committed to him; that he has allowed his physical nature to usurp authority. And if presently he tells you that he cannot keep his body in "soberness, temperance and chastity," it is only that the mastery of the physical over the spiritual is growing stronger.

Are we any of us sufficiently alive to the duty of self-discipline? Men have pampered their bodies till poverty seems to them more intolerable than sin, till insignificant privations leave them irritated and discontented. What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? are questions that occupy far too large a place in the thoughts of the men and women of our time.

So the soul is made to minister to the body, and not the body to the soul.

Reverse that process and human life begins to move harmoniously.

"Let us not always say
'Spite of the flesh to-day

I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings.
Let us say 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now, than flesh helps soul!'"

For the body has itself a spiritual meaning, and the very appetites that minister to the lower nature may themselves become uplifted. All beauty is sacramental if rightly interpreted.

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—
Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?"

Drink has degraded unnumbered multitudes of men; yet He placed the cup in the hands of His disciples saying, "Drink this in remembrance of Me." Marriage may be "enterprised and taken in hand unadvisedly, lightly, and wantonly, like brute beasts that have no understanding," yet marriage becomes the symbol of the love of Christ for the Church.

But what is the motive for self-discipline? Why should I keep under my body and bring it into subjection? The answer is in the appeal of St. Paul, "I beseech you that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." The end of self-discipline is self-oblation.

For the body is the instrument of service. Whatever subtle means of communication there may be between soul and soul, the normal vehicle of such communion is the physical organism. Even in our holiest acts of worship the body takes its part. It is a false view of worship that regards it as the escape of the soul from the limitations of our physical life. It is through the physical act of baptism that we are admitted into the Christian society; it is through the physical act of eating and drinking that we are united to the Divine humanity of Christ.

It follows from all this that whatever degrades the body enfeebles the soul's power of self-expression. It is only the constant realization that our bodies belong to God that can preserve the true balance of our nature. St. Paul enforces the appeal for chastity by the assertion that our members are the members of Christ, that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are God's."

The principle is far-reaching in its application. For if the degradation of the body is an injury done to God, what shall we say about the contented acquiescence of many Christian people in social conditions that render any right development of the physical nature almost impossible for

many of our fellow-men ? For if luxury degrades the body at one end of our social order, the perpetual pressure of physical needs stunts the soul at the other. He was a wise man who prayed "Give me neither poverty nor riches." For life develops most fully where the body is neither pampered nor starved.

All this constitutes a call to us as Christian men and women to set before our own age a simpler standard of life. Self-indulgence leaves our physical nature unresponsive to the call of the Spirit. Remember Christ's complaint of the men of His own day, "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing." Grossness of heart is the penalty of a life that has not learnt self-control. And grossness of heart is the enemy of all real gladness. For the exhilaration that comes with the growing consciousness of self-mastery is a greater and nobler thing than the pleasures that belong to the life of self-indulgence. It is the joy of the mountaineer over nature's obstacles vanquished, the joy of the athlete in the consciousness of the physical organism brought under control, the thrill of the martyr in the realization of the soul-throb that conquers pain.

But sometimes the physical nature seeks to reassert its mastery not by way of sin but by way

of suffering, and then the soul must learn to endure. It must not take sides with the flesh against God. It must learn to pray the prayer, "If this cup may not pass from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done." "Christ having suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." It is in the school of suffering that many a saint of God has learnt the great lesson of self-forgetfulness.

The captain of our Salvation was "made perfect through suffering."

There is no virtue in suffering that we wantonly inflict on our own bodies.

"The gifts of birth, death, genius, suffering,
Are all for His hand only to bestow.
Receive thy portion and be satisfied.
Who crowns himself a king is not the more
Royal; nor he who mars himself with stripes
The more partaken of the Cross of Christ.

"But if Himself He come to thee and stand
Beside thee, gazing down on thee with eyes
That smile and suffer; that will smite thy heart
With their own pity to a passionate peace;
And reach to thee Himself the Holy Cup,
Pallid and royal, saying, Drink with Me,
Wilt thou refuse? Nay, not for Paradise.
Hold fast His hand.
Though the nails pierce thine too, take only care
Lest one drop of the sacramental wine
Be spilled, of that which ever shall unite
Thee, soul and body to thy living Lord."

XII

MAGNANIMITY[1]

IF we were each of us asked to sum up in one word what we regarded as the supreme excellence of human character, those who had learnt best to understand the meaning of words would reply, Magnanimity, large-heartedness. "All honourable life flows from four sources—knowledge, fellowship, magnanimity, moderation." Those words of Cicero express the best of the ethical teaching of the ancient world. It was the task of Christianity to lift the grace of magnanimity above the other three, so that it became the supreme virtue—that in the exercise of which humanity was likest God.

Yet though large-heartedness is a Christian ideal, it is to a great non-Christian Philosopher that we should instinctively turn for one of the most adequate presentments of the ideal. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius stand for all time

[1] A Paper read at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers.

as a witness of the nobility of the conception of life that Stoicism, touched and warmed by Neo-Platonic thought, could present to men. Yet a note of isolation and loneliness sounds through it all. It is the large-heartedness of a man who has outlived illusions and trained himself to walk alone, facing the present with courage and the future with equanimity rather than with hope.

> " But while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
> Seem here no painful inch to gain,
> Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
> Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

The grace of magnanimity that Marcus Aurelius guarded within the sanctuary of his own soul was being preached in all the cities of the Empire by the followers of the crucified Nazarene. For I do not know of any other word that gives so accurately the meaning of the new word ἀγάπη that Christianity brought with it into the world. For ἀγάπη is exactly that combination of sympathy, courage and hope that is suggested by the word magnanimity.

The last Stoic Emperor dies, and for centuries the western world is overwhelmed by a vast flood of barbarism. And when at last the flood subsides, and organic social life emerges, the supreme ideal

is again magnanimity. It is the ideal of life to which the young knight dedicates himself as he watches his arms all night before the altar. It becomes articulate in the great cycles of romance that gather around the name of Arthur or Roland. It links the brute strength of the Teuton with the ideas of self-discipline that were the noblest inheritance from the Roman world, and consecrates both to obedience to the Christian ideal of self-forgetful service. It is just this quality of large-heartedness that makes the great figures of early Mediæval History stand out so clearly against the dark background of the iron age—its Charles the Great, Barbarossa, St. Louis of France, Simon de Montfort, and a hundred more. And it is just this quality of large-heartedness that we miss in the men who led the life of Europe a century later.

Turn a page of history and you are in the great Elizabethan age. And again magnanimity is the supreme virtue to be sought for. You see it portrayed in the noble stanzas of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; in the brief and beautiful life of Sir Philip Sidney. It is just this quality that lifts the life of a Raleigh or a Drake out of piracy into nobility, and gives to the controversial works of men like Hooker and Jewel a distinctive character of their own. And it is Shakespeare's

supreme title to moral greatness that he learned to recognize in ever increasing degree that forgiveness is nobler than revenge and love stronger than hate. So, when his great tragedies are done, he crowns his life work by setting on the stage three illustrations of the meaning of magnanimity in Hermione, Prospero and Imogen. And there is one thing that is specially remarkable in Shakespeare—it is that his women have more than his men of the grace of magnanimity. Shakespeare has drawn for us not a few mean men, but except for Goneril and Regan, who after all are mere stage figures with no real life in them, I hardly know where you will find a mean woman in any of his great dramas.

I always think of Lord Falkland as the last great figure in our history in whom the special Elizabethan grace of magnanimity showed itself.

Noble as the Puritan conception of life was in many ways, it was not a magnanimous conception. It " loved those that were godly, much misliking the wicked and profane." What a giant among men Milton would have been if only large-heartedness had been added to all his other splendid gifts.

But I have wandered too far into history, and must come back nearer to my starting point. What is magnanimity? Fortunately, we can

answer that question in two ways. St. Paul gave us, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, a splendid summary of what the word means; and our Lord Jesus Christ gave us, on the stage of human history, the supreme example of magnanimity as the motive power of life.

Consider St. Paul's definition. It is sometimes a help to look at the reverse of any quality that we want to realize. The opposite of magnanimity is small-mindedness. Here is the small-minded man as St. Paul conceives him. Do we not most of us know him? He is impatient and unkind, envious, boastful, proud, offensive, self-seeking, irritable, eager to think evil, enjoys wrong and falsehood, cannot bear or trust, or hope or endure. And the opposite of all this is magnanimity. There are four features in St. Paul's conception of magnanimity that I want you specially to notice.

1. Unselfishness. There is something magnificently opposed to common-sense in magnanimity. It does not seek its own—its own rights, or good, or interests. It knows that it is not disgraceful to be defrauded, but only to defraud. The magnanimous man will not support with enthusiasm proposals for lifting the burden of taxation from his shoulders to lay it on those of others. He will not be for ever asserting his right to do

what he wills with his own. He will not set personal prosperity before his children as the supreme good.

2. Its humility. The magnanimous man is not angry if his claims to respect and difference are not recognized. His reward is not in popular applause but in the consciousness of duty done. What he offers to men less fortunate than himself will not be patronage, but friendship.

3. Its optimism. The magnanimous man is the man who has determined to think the best of men. Do you remember the confession of Paracelsus, in the last scene of Browning's poem? It is a confession of failure in the grace of magnanimity :—

"In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him."

4. Its permanence. So St. Paul's hymn ends with a crash of triumph. Prophecies pass,

tongues cease, knowledge vanishes away—three virtues abide, and the greatest of these is magnanimity, for it is nearest to the very heart of God.

But it is in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ that we see the grace of magnanimity translated into actual exercise. Take one point alone. How much of the secret of His influence lay in the fact that He consistently and resolutely thought the best of people. He would not diffuse around Him the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. But, you may say, look at the result. One apostle betrayed, another denied Him. True, but the apostle who betrayed Him found life intolerable, and the apostle that denied Him lived to confess Him even unto death. Do you think those things would have happened if our Lord had been constantly on the watch for signs of treachery? And remember that our Lord lived and moved in a small-minded atmosphere. The Jews of that age suffered from the disease of small-mindedness that is the special danger of small nations oppressed by great ones. There was the small-mindedness of the Pharisees, punctilious about minutiæ of ritual, but unresponsive to the great virtues; and there was the small-mindedness of the people, who saw without perceiving and heard without understand-

ing. And there was the small-mindedness of the disciples, eager to rebuke good deeds done outside their own immediate circle, and contending, even at the last hour of intercourse, who should be the greatest. And through all this atmosphere of mean ambitions and paltry controversies He moves on His way, calm, large-hearted, so that every human life that He touched but for a moment blossomed into unexpected beauty and fragrance. What was the secret of it all? Surely it was the nights of prayer on the mountains when He turned from all the littlenesses of men to bathe His soul in the healing waters of the love of God.

How can a man become magnanimous? By learning to see human life constantly from the standpoint of eternity. There is no other way. Lose sight of the infinite, and the meannesses and littlenesses of life have you in their grasp. Is not that the real meaning of prayer—the readjustment of our life to the point of view of the infinite? "I hear the roll of the ages," is Tennyson's answer to a spiteful letter. "I have seen the vision of the infinite," is the answer of the magnanimous man to the clamour of all mean things.

And how we need magnanimous people in the life of to-day. How, most of all, we need magnanimous women. For there is much in life that tends to make women small-minded.

It is all very well for the poet to sing of "the trival round, the common task," but every woman knows the belittling influence of the multitude of trivialities that make up domestic life. And outside domestic life, social conventions lie in wait for her—the mean, paltry, stupid, conventions of modern England. Our social life in England is cleaner, larger, perhaps, than it used to be, but oh, how small it is still! We do not bear—we complain; we do not believe, we distrust; we do not hope, we fear; we do not endure, we resent.

Shall I point you to our newspapers? Every nation gets the kind of press that it deserves. What of our press? There is much to commend. There are certain standards of honour and good feeling that make our English Press an institution of which we need not be ashamed. But is it magnanimous? Does it lead us to a larger outlook? Does it ennoble us with a finer vision? Would it have a chance of paying its way if it did? Is it magnanimity that is eager to impute the worst and lowest motives to the statesmen of other nations? Is it magnanimity that fills columns with the degrading stories of squalid crime? Is it magnanimity that assumes that the motives of opponents must be base self-interest and unscrupulous greed? Or shall I take you

to religion? Is English religion a large-hearted thing? Are there no quarrels behind the Master's back who should be the greatest? No tendency to think evil of those who differ from us? Are social distinctions and claims of privilege left outside the Church of Christ? Are our gifts free from the taint of patronage or the desire for the praise of men?

And yet it is not the "overman" of Nietzsche or the cold-blooded engineer of Wells' earlier social romances to whom the future belongs. It is the magnanimous man who will save the world, though perhaps he will do so still only by dying for it. We need men who even here

> "Watch, like God, the rolling hours,
> With larger other eyes than ours,
> To make allowance for us all."

You have been dealing in this Conference with problems connected with the training of children. Magnanimity is a grace that children develop easily if they are surrounded by large-hearted people. But in an atmosphere of cynicism they become first bewildered and then selfish. A generous impulse, once checked, does not easily reassert itself; bitter and harsh judgments, carelessly spoken in the presence of our children,

sink very deep into their minds. Their earliest lessons in the meanness of the world are often learnt at home.

I am sure, for example, that the habit into which many people fall, of contrasting the present unfavourably with the past, and practically implying that the world is going downhill, is a very real injury to the minds of our children. For magnanimity is, as I have said, a combination of sympathy, courage and hope. May I point you, just once more, to the example of our Lord. A great deal of discussion has recently taken place with regard to our Lord's Apocalyptic sayings. But do we not get near to the heart of the matter when we recognize that what underlay them all was the desire to develop in His disciples the instinct of hope. "Look forward to the good that is to come, not back to the good that is past." And how much of the large-heartedness of the early Christians was connected with this habit of looking forward. "Let your gentleness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We can hardly think of magnanimity without recalling Matthew Arnold's tribute to his father in *Rugby Chapel*. I cannot close better than by recalling to you a few lines of the poem :—

"And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else

* * * * *

Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire,
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind."

Canning once claimed that he had called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old. That is what we are all ordered to do. And magnanimity—large-heartedness, is God's reward to those who obey the call. Life is ennobled by the realization of the Eternal.

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